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From the Author.

AN EXAMINATION OF Mr. ROBINSON of Cambridge's PLEA FOR THE DIVINITY of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

By a late MEMBER of the UNIVERSITY.

In the Preface, a part of Mr. White of Oxford's Appendix to his late Bampton-Sermons, is considered.

Tantamne rem tam negligenter——
TERENT. ANDR.

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THE

THE PREFACE.

The following work not controverſial. Anecdote of Father Paul *of* Venice. Chriſt's *true character to be chiefly ſought for in the New Teſtament.* Juſtin Martyr, *a fanciful interpreter of Scripture. The* Koran *of* Mahomet *right in reſpect of the true doctrine of the Unity of God. Preſent State of opinions concerning the Perſon of Jeſus Chriſt.* Mr. White's *very reprehenſible language concerning Socinianiſm and Socinians. Remarks upon it. A ſketch of the Scripture-evidence for and againſt the preexiſtence of* Jeſus Chriſt. *Citation from the late Lord* Barrington.

THE title of this work may cauſe it to be looked upon by many as mere theological controverſy, of which they have heard ſo much and been ſo heartily tired; and determine them to look no further. If the writer knows any thing of himſelf and his diſpoſitions, there is nothing to which he is more averſe than to wrangle and diſpute about any thing, and particularly on ſuch a ſubject. His engaging himſelf therein at preſent, took its origin, as is intimated in the Introduction, from a concern to ſee the Scriptures ex-

hibited in such a manner, on a very important point both of faith and practice, as to impose on the greater number who are wont to take bold assertion for demonstration, and so as to discourage all rational inquiry. An attempt to shew the wrongness of such treatment of those sacred writings, and to point out the way to arrive at their true meaning, will, 'tis hoped, be found to have nothing of contentious divinity in it. Indeed the Author here examined has seldom given himself the trouble of doing any thing more, than barely to bring together texts of Scripture, without explaining them, or even shewing how they apply to his purpose, in proving Jesus Christ to be *truly* and *properly God:* presuming that it would be taken for granted, at sight, and upon his authority, that they prove the point for which he assigns them. So that the title of this tract of mine might with very great propriety have been; "An explanation of all the texts of Scripture produced by Mr. R. in proof of the Divinity of Jesus Christ." How far it may afford any thing new or useful, the reader will judge.

Bishop Burnet, in his life of Bedell, Bishop of Kilmore, in Ireland, who had been chaplain to the English embassy at Venice, and on terms of intimacy with the great Father Paul; mentions, in one place, "that (*a*) Bedell found the Father

(*a*) "Life of Bedell, Bishop of Kilmore, in Ireland, 1685. "p. 9."

" had read over the Greek New Teſtament with " ſo much exactneſs, that having uſed to mark " every word, when he had fully weighed the " importance of it, as he went through it; he " had, by going often over it, and obſerving " what he paſſed over in a former reading, grown " up to that at laſt, that every word was marked " of the whole New Teſtament; and when Bedell " ſuggeſted to him critical explications of ſome " paſſages that he had not underſtood before, he " received them with the tranſports of one that " leapt for joy, and that valued the diſcoveries of " divine truth beyond all other things." I ſhould be glad to emulate the diligence and exactneſs of theſe two eminent perſons, as I profeſs an equal regard and reverence for thoſe divine writings: and to ſee any juſt illuſtration of them, or an error of my own rectified, would, I truſt, give me pleaſure above any worldly acquiſition. If I have been miſtaken in what is here put before the Public, it has not been for want of application and pains to come at the truth. And I have been as careful not to ſet down any thing for which I had not good grounds, and not to give a falſe colouring or undue weight to any interpretation, as if I had been telling out money to a child.

I am very far however from imagining, that I have always given the true meaning, and fallen into no errors in explaining the many paſſages

that have come before me; especially those from the Old Testament, which are so numerous, and by which our author would continually prove Jesus Christ to be Jehovah, the supreme God. I have not indeed the least doubt, but that I have always clearly shewn, that they make not for his purpose; though I am not always so certain, that I have assigned the true sense.

A Divine of the church of England, cited with respect in the following pages, who has given proof of superior knowlege of the Scriptures; though himself approving the Divinity of Christ, does nevertheless remark, with great judgment, that it is "a doctrine which draws its *decisive* proofs from the New Testament only." The contrary opinion and method has been a most lasting cause of much misconstruction of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and of many errors. It had its rise from the custom of the Jews in our Saviour's time, of applying their Scriptures to religious subjects, upon all occasions. Some instances of the kind, Grotius, Hammond, and the most esteemed commentators have observed, even in the writers of the New Testament; of their applying the words of their antient prophets to the matter they were treating of, by way of accommodation only, when the prophet himself was far from intending any thing of the kind. The christian writers, after the apostles, gave still more into this custom. In the catholic epistle of Bar-

nabas, whoever was the author of it, for the learned are not agreed, though he was probably coeval with the times of the apoſtles; we are preſented continually with ſpiritual ſignifications of the ceremonial law of the Jews, applied to Chriſt and the goſpel. But Juſtin Martyr takes a wider range, and ſeems to have entertained the wild opinion, that whatever was injoined to the Iſraelites in the Old Teſtament, might be myſtically applied to the New, and had its fulfilment in it. I put in the margin (*b*) one inſtance out of a thouſand,

(*b*) In the predictions, which the Patriarch Jacob was made to utter upon his death-bed, relating to his ſons and their future deſtinations, he ſays Gen. xlix. 11. concerning Judah; that *binding his foal unto the vine, and his aſs's colt unto the vine of Sorek, he waſhed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes.* The beſt commentators, and among them our Biſhop Patrick, interpret this of the fertility of Judah's country, abounding with vineyards and paſtures, which is ſet forth in hyperbolical expreſſions, viz. that the vines ſhould be as common there, as the thorn-hedges in other places; ſo that they might tie aſſes with their colts to them; and that wine would be as common as water, ſo that they ſhould have enough, not only to drink, but to waſh their clothes in it. But Juſtin ſays; "That which is related here "by Moſes, and foretold by the Patriarch Jacob; *that he "ſhall waſh his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood "of grapes*, ſignified that Chriſt ſhould waſh thoſe that be- "lieved on him in his blood. For the holy Spirit called "thoſe *his garments*, who received remiſſion of ſins by him, "among whom he is always preſent by his power, and ſhall "be evidently ſo at his ſecond coming. But that which the "Scripture

thouſand, that continually occur in his writings. Whether he borrowed it from Barnabas, or rather perhaps from Philo, the Platonizing Jew of Alexandria, who deals much in allegorizing the facts of the Bible, and giving them a moral meaning; Juſtin's fruitful imagination improved upon it. And coming to the reading of the Bible, full of veneration for Plato, and his philoſophy; as what we wiſh to be true we eaſily believe, he there ſoon finds, that Plato agreed with Moſes (*c*), that the world was made by *the Word*; and taking it for granted upon very weak proof, that this *Word* was Jeſus Chriſt, he runs away with it, and actually in a manner finds nothing elſe in the Old Teſtament. For he makes Chriſt God's miniſter in the creation of the world; a ſubordinate God, ſtill keeping to Plato's idea; his repreſentative; who

" Scripture mentions of *the blood of the grape*, with great " nicety ſignifies, that Chriſt himſelf ſhould have his blood, " not from the ſeed of man, but from the power of God. " For in like manner as man did not generate *the blood of the* " *vine*, but God: ſo he here predicted, that the blood of " Chriſt ſhould not proceed from human ſeed, but from the " power of God. And this very prophecy, Sirs, ſhews, that " Chriſt was not a man of men, born after the common way " of men." Juſtin Martyr. Dial. cum Tryph. p. 149, 150.

He repeats the ſame in his firſt Apology, p. 6. The reader will judge with what caution and reſerve a writer who indulges ſuch fancies continually, is to be truſted, in his interpretations of Scripture.

(*c*) Apol. i. p. 78. See alſo Apol. ii. or more properly i. in many parts of it.

appeared

appeared and acted for the supreme God. It was Christ, according to him, who appeared to Abraham, to Jacob, and to Moses. In short, Jehovah, the one supreme God, is little seen in Justin's system of the Old Testament: but only Christ, his agent, and delegate, *the first of the creatures* that he made: for this pious, mystic interpreter, does not fall into the extreme of aftertimes, in making Christ *the most high God*; though he principally led the way to it.

I have dwelled the more on this matter; because this early writer has misled the whole christian world in this fancy of making Christ the chief transactor of every thing in the Old Testament; and also becaufe it is owing to the like prepossessions and prejudices, by which he was misled, that to this day, we are still in our infancy as it were, with respect to our understanding the language of the Scriptures, and their true interpretation, in many respects. The right way certainly would be, to endeavour to attain a just knowlege of the sacred, as we would to understand other antient authors, the Greek and Latin historians and philosophers. To these latter we come, to find out what they relate and teach, without any partiality in favour of particular facts, or doctrines. But this method is intirely reversed in the common way of studying the Scriptures. All persons in general go to them, not to search out what they teach, but to confirm themselves in what they have been taught already from their childhood,

or

or have taken up on the authority of the church or ſect to which they happen to belong: and being thus reſolved beforehand, their jaundiced eye can ſee nothing in the Scriptures, but what intirely agrees with their own ſentiments.

The method eſpouſed by the Author here examined is of this kind. For laying it down as a doctrine, of which he was moſt fully perſuaded himſelf, that Jeſus Chriſt *was truly and properly God*; in which he was ſurely at his full liberty, as others, to declare their contrary perſuaſion: inſtead of ſhewing, by a proper reſearch into the Scriptures, that they teach this doctrine; he contents himſelf with heaping up a great number of texts, which, he ſtrongly aſſerts, do prove it; but never takes any pains to ſhew that they do ſo, except by ſetting his invention to work, and boldly maintaining the ſame point, under various aſſumed characters. And thus his readers are allured implicitly to rely on his authority, and never to go any farther, in making uſe of their own eyes and underſtandings. And when *the blind thus lead the blind*, I beg pardon if the expreſſion be too ſtrong; the Scripture-proverb tells us what will be the conſequence.

I hope it will not be deemed a needleſs detaining of the reader, to point out by one example, what a wrong bias is hung upon the mind by this ſummary way of proceeding with the Scriptures, ſo as to hinder its coming at the truth. When

our

our Lord ſays, John vi. 38. *I came down from heaven*, not to do mine own will, &c. And in another place, xvi. 28. *I came forth from the Father*, and am come into the world: the generality of chriſtians immediately conclude, that Chriſt thereby ſignifies, that he lived in a former ſtate, before he was born at Bethlehem; and are ready to think thoſe perſons moſt unreaſonable, if not impious, that do not allow ſo obvious a concluſion as they think is neceſſarily to be formed from it. And yet this language conveyed no ſuch meaning to our Lord's apoſtles; nor would it to us, if we properly examined into it. For, with regard to the firſt inſtance; if we quote the whole verſe, of which I have only given a part, it will ſhew, that our Saviour meant no more by his *coming down from heaven*, than that he was the Meſſiah, God's choſen meſſenger. For I *came down from heaven*, ſays he, not to do mine own will, but the will of HIM THAT SENT ME; where evidently the laſt clauſe explains the former, and ſhews its meaning. But being *ſent from God*, or *from the Father*, implies no more than being a divine meſſenger, or prophet. For of John the Baptiſt it is ſaid, John i. 6. that he was a man *ſent from God*. And in like manner our Lord himſelf expounds his own *coming forth from God*, John viii. 42; when he ſays to the unbelieving Jews; I *proceeded forth*, and *came from God:* neither came I of myſelf, but *he ſent me*. His *proceeding forth* and *coming from God*

God therefore, was his being God's extraordinary meſſenger, the Meſſiah. See p. 48.

It is by deductions thus made directly from the Scriptures themſelves, that chriſtians ſhould be informed concerning what is therein revealed, relating to the Perſon and office of Jeſus Chriſt, or any other important point; and not from ſeparate, detached paſſages of Scripture, any how patched together, and thus ſeeming to have a different ſenſe from that which they really bear in their proper connection.

In examining what Mr. Robinſon has brought to oppoſe the unity of God as taught by Mahomet, in the following work; it was judged proper to take under conſideration at the ſame time, what has been offered by a very (*d*) late writer upon the ſubject; and we have found nothing advanced by them of any weight whatſoever. And though neither of theſe gentlemen have treated the ſubject on ſet purpoſe, but incidentally; I am perſuaded that neither they, nor any other perſon, will ever be able to produce any thing, that ſhall invalidate the doctrine of the falſe prophet in this reſpect, as delivered in the Koran: for he had the wiſdom and the art to build his foundation on the jewiſh and chriſtian Scriptures.

(*d*) " A compariſon of Mahometiſm and Chriſtianity" —Sermons at the Bampton-Lecture; by Joſeph White, B. D. Fellow of Wadham college, and Laudian Profeſſor of Arabic. 1784.

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As this will be found to be the truth, the more it is ſought into; it will ſhew that Mr. White has given a very defective, and in one reſpect too unfavourable an account of the Mahometan religion (*e*). For dreadful as the ravages were, which its votaries at firſt committed, and fatal as its effects have been in many countries; yet in the hands and under the direction of that Divine Providence, which overruleth all things, and bringeth good out of evil, it has retained, and preſerves in

(*e*) I am glad to inſert the opinion of a venerable writer, in concurrence with what is advanced in the following work, of the benefits of Mahometiſm to the world, as it was at the time when he appeared: though he does not touch upon the great advantage which I truſt the chriſtian nations will derive from that religion, falſe as it is in many reſpects. "All "authors agree, that what gave Mahomet the greateſt room "to advance his new religion, was the diſtracted, ignorant, "corrupt ſtate of the eaſtern church at that time; the miſera- "ble contentions, and moſt horrid perſecutions, on every re- "ligious pretence; the diſſoluteneſs of all ſects and parties: "and 'tis evident that he contributed not only to reform the "morals of a great part of the world, but likewiſe reduced "them from polytheiſm and groſs idolatry, to the belief and "worſhip of one God; which was the principal doctrine he ſet "out with at firſt, and gained great reputation by; and which "he made the ground of his pretended miſſion. His ſyſtem "contains a great deal of pure chriſtianity; it enforces the vir- "tues of charity, juſtice, fidelity, temperance, in the ſtrongeſt "manner; it prohibits extortion, and all kinds of cruelty, "even to brutes; and binds its votaries to the ſtricteſt order, "regularity, and devotion." Conſiderations on the Theory of Religion, by Dr. Law, Biſhop of Carliſle, p. 162, 163. Ed. iv. 1759.

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its purity, the doctrine of the Divine Unity, taught by Moſes and Jeſus Chriſt; and may, and probably will be the means in time of bringing back the chriſtian nations to the acknowlegement of it.

Imperfect knowlege, miſtakes, prejudices in favour of particular opinions, belong to mortals. We are none of us exempt from them. But all ſhould watch over themſelves, that theſe natural infirmities do not kindle unreaſonable paſſion againſt thoſe who diſſent from them, and hurry them into miſrepreſentation and untruth. It will be judged, whether this has not been the caſe and conduct of Mr. White, from the extract I ſhall make from him. But I would firſt put down a very brief ſtate of facts relating to the ſubject; of the truth of which the learned and impartial will decide.

The ſacred writers of the Old and New Teſtament, are ſtrangers to any God, but one; one ſingle Perſon, Jehovah, as he is ſtiled in the hebrew Scriptures; and in the New Teſtament, *the Father, who* is *in heaven.* Our Lord knew no other God, ſpake of no other, prayed to no other, nor directed his followers to pray to or worſhip any other. After he had left the world, and before his apoſtles were all dead, the learned heathen converts, not able to endure, that a mortal man, who had been crucified, ſhould be the founder of their new religion, took upon themſelves to main-

maintain, that this was mere appearance, and no reality. Thoſe that came after went on miſtaking Chriſt's true perſon, till in the courſe of a few ages, it was eſtabliſhed by the firſt chriſtian emperor, that he was God equal to the Father. By other emperors the Arian doctrine concerning him, was revived and enforced. That of the council of Nice however prevailed, and continued, during the more than midnight darkneſs that overſpread the whole chriſtian world, till the Reformation. The learned divines in our own and other countries, who then ſeparated from the church of Rome, were contented with what had been handed down to them concerning Chriſt, without farther inquiry. Others doubted, and ſearching the Scriptures, found there was no foundation for it; and ſome of them publiſhed their ſentiments, embracing either the Arian, or what then began *to be called*, the *Socinian* opinion concerning Chriſt; but which was *in reality* the doctrine of the apoſtles. About a century ago, were publiſhed, what are ſtiled *Unitarian Tracts*, of different anonymous authors; among whom the famous Mr. Locke is named as one. From the reception theſe met with, it was imagined the learned inquiſitive part of the clergy and laity were diſpoſed towards the ſentiment they held forth: but ſoon after that, thoſe two great and good men, Mr. Whiſton and Dr. Clarke, appearing openly upon the liſts, defenders of the Arian doctrine, and maintaining it moſt ably by

their writings; it became after that a very prevailing opinion among the learned in the eſtabliſhed church, and with the more liberal Diſſenters. In 1759, Dr. Lardner publiſhed a Letter, written by him in the year 1730, and addreſſed to *Papinian*; who was the Rev. Mr. Tomkins, a learned and worthy diſſenter, of the Arian perſuaſion. The publication of this letter, together with two additional Poſtſcripts, ſoon made a great revolution in the opinions of learned men. For the piece was ſoon known to be his, though without his name; and his numerous writings were already in the higheſt requeſt, his character alſo for probity, impartiality, for critical ſkill, and the knowlege of the Scriptures and of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, inferior to none, and in ſome of theſe reſpects, ſuperior to any of the age in which he lived. The doctrine he defended was what Mr. White calls *Socinianiſm:* but Dr. Lardner had drawn it not from Socinus or his followers, but from a better ſource, that of the Scriptures themſelves (*f*). In one of his Poſt-

(*f*) "I muſt acknowlege, that I have not been greatly "converſant with the writers of that denomination, *viz.* "*the Socinians.*—I have formed my ſentiments upon the "Scriptures, and by reading ſuch commentators, chiefly, "as are in the beſt repute. I may add, that the reading "of the ancient writers of the Church has been of uſe to "confirm me, and to aſſiſt me in clearing up difficulties." "Lardner on the Logos, p. 55.

ſcripts, that learned man has alſo *demonſtrated*, if I may be allowed to uſe the term, that the Holy Spirit, is no third part of the Deity, no diſtinct divine agent, but only the power and influence of Almighty God. From that time, and by the labour of others, the Scriptures have been more diligently and accurately inveſtigated, and the early chriſtian writers examined as to this point; a diſquiſition, which is ſtill carrying on. And by the openings thence already made, and the farther illuſtrations given of the Scripture-language concerning Chriſt, many have been brought to ſee, that he was really what he declared himſelf, and his apoſtles declared him, a *man*, (John viii. 40. Acts ii. 22.) a human being, but inveſted with extraordinary divine powers: and this opinion is daily gaining ground.

In this ſtate of things among us, one wonders at the extreme ignorance, or whatever elſe we muſt call it, which could put Mr. White of Oxford upon writing the following *Philippic* againſt the learning, the principles, the chriſtianity, of thoſe whom he ſtiles Socinians. After inſinuating, that "the doctrine of the DIVINITY of "Chriſt is alike unknown to the Koran of Ma-"homet, and the Creed of Socinus: he pro-"ceeds;

"Yet notwithſtanding this remarkable coinci-"dence of opinion, ſays he, there is ſcarcely any "thing the modern Socinian affects to regard with

" greater abhorrence and indignation, than a " compariſon that aſſociates his tenets with thoſe " of Mahomet. To the eye of reaſon, how- " ever, the ſimilitude is clear and apparent. The " title of Unitarian is equally boaſted of by the " diſciple of Socinus and the Arabian prophet. " Both of them reject the Divinity of our Lord; " and, with a confidence wholly unbecoming a " being, whoſe faculties are ſo overclouded as " man's, both of them maintain the impoſſibi- " lity of a *threefold mode of ſubſiſtence in the* " *divine nature*, becauſe the human intellect is " incapable of forming any preciſe idea of the " ſubject: as if nothing could be real in the " *eſſence of the divinity*, which is not level to " the comprehenſion of man."——

" The Socinian and the Mahometan object to " our doctrine its inconſiſtency with human rea- " ſon. The objection ſuppoſes, that man is " poſſeſſed of a larger comprehenſion than falls " to the lot of mortality; and that what he can- " not comprehend, cannot be true."

" We appeal to the Scriptures. But the Ma- " hometans and Socinians have both diſcovered " the ſame methods of interpretation; and either " by falſe gloſſes pervert their plain obvious " meaning; or when the teſtimony is direct and " explicit, that no forced conſtruction can evade " it, they have recourſe to the laſt artifice of " abortive zeal; the cry of interpolation."——

" There

" There is no period of the Chriſtian Church " in which the Divinity of Chriſt was not ad- " mitted as a primary article, &c."

" If Chriſt was nothing more than *a mere man*, " how can it be accounted for, that his Divinity " ſhould be the general and current ſentiment " of the Church in ſo early a period as the pre- " ſent enemies of the doctrine are obliged to ac- " knowledge it was?"——

" Socinianiſm makes every thing doubtful. " And no wonder——while it makes ſo little of " the moſt expreſs declarations of Scripture, we " need not be ſurprized that it ſhould pay ſo " little reſpect to the plaineſt evidence of " hiſtory, &c."

" The gradation from Socinianiſm to Deiſm " is very ſlight (*g*), &c."

Remarks.

Remark 1. Such general, ſuperficial declamation, as the greater part of what is here produced, without facts to ſupport it, would not have merited the leaſt regard, had it not been in a book, where the author has diſplayed learning and judgment in other reſpects; which may therefore give him too much credit in this, with his numerous readers. But deficient as he is

(*g*) " Notes and authorities to Mr. White's Sermons," p. lv;——lvi.

here in *good* reaſoning, there is one ſpecies of argument, of which he knows well how to avail himſelf, *viz.* the *argumentum ab invidia ductum*; in trying to excite the prejudices and bad paſſions of his readers, againſt the perſons he oppoſes, if he cannot confute their arguments. This is ſtudiouſly purſued through many paragraphs, in his coupling Socinians and Mahometans together; as if the former were equally enemies to the goſpel with the latter, and their opinions equally obnoxious and to be avoided by thoſe who ſeek to become true Chriſtians.

He is however much miſinformed, if it be not a flight of imagination, in his aſſertion, that there is ſcarcely any thing the modern Socinian affects to regard with greater abhorrence and indignation, than a compariſon that aſſociates his tenets with thoſe of Mahomet. They who are perſuaded from the Scriptures, from which alone they can learn any thing of him, that Jeſus Chriſt was a human being, and not God; and that there is but one God, who is the Father of Chriſt and of all beings; ſo far from looking upon it as a reproach, or being angry at being ranked with Mahometans in the belief of this great truth, they would rather glory in it; and do ſincerely rejoice in the thought, that ſo large a part of their fellow-creatures, in numbers ſurpaſſing chriſtians, retain a knowlege of ſuch infinite importance

portance as the unity of God; which cannot but have the beſt effect upon their minds, and may in time turn out a great bleſſing to the whole chriſtian world; as is particularly mentioned in the following work.

Remark 2. In the body of his Sermons, and in this Appendix, Mr. White repeats over and over; that the grand objection of Unitarians to the doctrine of the Trinity and the Divinity of Chriſt, is its being incomprehenſible to human reaſon, and inconſiſtent with it. I will frankly own to him, that I muſt reject whatever comes to me under the latter predicament, as inconſiſtent with and contradictory to my reaſon; becauſe this is the only light and direction which my Maker has given me, by which to judge of any thing, even of his own character and perfections, and the credibility of any farther diſcovery he may make of his will, than this his light of nature affords. And I am perſuaded, he cannot require the belief of any thing which ſhocks and goes againſt the natural underſtanding he has given me: for that would be to put me under different and impoſſible obligations at the ſame time. I cannot therefore believe the greater part of the Creed falſely aſcribed to Athanaſius; that for inſtance, the Father is eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghoſt eternal: and yet that they are not three eternals, but one eternal; and *ſo on*. However I do not find that Almighty God calls upon me in the Scriptures to believe

any thing of this kind. And I am happy, that I can expreſs my faith, agreeably to the goſpel, in more intelligible terms than our author is conſtrained to make uſe of in explaining his; where he talks of *the eſſence of the Divinity*, and *a threefold mode of ſubſiſtence in the Divine nature*; which it is very well if he himſelf can underſtand. I neither pretend to it, nor deſire it. But I would remind him, that no Unitarian that I know, or have read of, did ever object to any part of a Divine revelation, becauſe it was beyond his comprehenſion. Let me but know clearly, that God has ſignified his mind and will; and then, let the ſubject be ever ſo unfathomable by me, I will receive and believe it; becauſe no better reaſon can poſſibly be given for any thing, than that God hath ſaid it.

Remark 3. It is eaſy in words to aſſert, that the Divinity of Chriſt, or his being the ſupreme God; was the general and current ſentiment of chriſtians from the firſt: but the inquiry is, what was the fact. At the cloſe of theſe remarks, Mr. White will ſee a brief ſketch of the Scripture-evidence relating to it. And an author to whom he points, but whom his invectives cannot reach, has produced ſuch evidence to the contrary from this and other ſources, as it would have well become him to have confuted, before he ventured to pronounce upon it with ſo much confidence. The ſubſtance of what that author has elſewhere exhibited

exhibited more at large, is to be found in a very ſhort compaſs, under this title: *'Arguments from hiſtory againſt the divinity and preexiſtence of Chriſt*, and is contained in a ſmall Tract, entitled a General View of the Unity of God, &c. (*b*).

Remark 4. " But the Socinians, ſays Mr. White, " imitate the Mahometans; and either by falſe " gloſſes pervert the plain and obvious meaning " of the Scriptures; or when the teſtimony is ſo " direct and explicit, that no forced conſtruction " can evade it, they have recourſe to the laſt " artifice of abortive zeal; the cry of interpola- " tion! and it is no wonder, while they make ſo " little of the moſt expreſs declarations of Scrip- " ture, that they ſhould pay ſo little reſpect to the " plaineſt evidence of hiſtory."

As theſe reflections are caſt on modern unitarians, it becomes him to name who they are that

(*b*) By Joſeph Prieſtley, LL. D. F. R. S. This tract is ſo compleat and comprehenſive for its ſize, that I know few that are to be named with it; except a ſmall piece, on a very different ſubject, admirably drawn up, and calculated to teach the common chriſtian the uſe of his rational powers in religion, as well as his duty, at the ſame time: the abridgment of a larger moſt valuable work, which has exhauſted and exhibited every thing that good ſenſe or exact criticiſm could furniſh on a ſubject of much controverſy among chriſtians, but to which it has probably put an end: I refer to " A " practical enquiry into the authority, nature, and deſign of " the LORD'S SUPPER, as they are explained in the New " Teſtament itſelf." By William Bell, D. D. Prebendary of Weſtminſter.

are

are guilty of ſuch unfair arts; or where they allege that the Scriptures are interpolated, when there is no ground for it. Such inſinuations will recoil upon their accuſer, unleſs he gives proof of them; and will ſhew, that he ſpeaks from no good fund within.

To praiſe the living would be invidious and aukward: but of thoſe who have finiſhed their courſe well, we may ſpeak freely and be heard. Is there a literary character, that ſtands higher upon the liſts of fame, as a man, a chriſtian, and a divine, than the late Dr. Lardner? After an education in an Univerſity abroad, at that time not inferior in learned Tutors to either of our own, on his return to his own country, he became early acquainted with the worthy and learned in the Church eſtabliſhed, and out of it. Archbiſhop Secker, bred a Diſſenter, like himſelf, cultivated and courted his friendſhip through life. His Vindication of ſome of our Lord's miracles againſt Mr. Woolſton's attacks, is among the firſt upon that occaſion, and (*i*) the moſt candid. But his *Credibility of the Goſpel*, in 17 vols. 8vo, and Jewiſh and Heathen Teſtimonies to its truth, in 4 vols. 4to, have exhibited ſuch a maſs of evidence for it, and eſtabliſhed it on ſo broad a foundation as nothing can ſhake. In this he gives

(*i*) See his preface to that work, and correſpondence upon it with the Biſhop of Chicheſter. Memoirs of Dr. Lardner's life, p. 14—31.

continu-

continually curious and useful instances of critical skill and judgment: but his love of truth and impartiality is without example, in fairly representing every argument and objection, without the least discernible bias to any opinion or party. His piety and humility are conspicuous in all his writings, and particularly in his Sermons in three volumes; the last containing Memoirs of his life and writings; some of which are among the best models for pulpit-discourses in our language, in explaining important passages of the gospel, and pointing out the easy and natural instruction to be deduced from it.

And yet this Dr. Lardner, to whom christianity and the christian world, and our own nation in particular, in that respect, owes so many obligations, shall be classed with Mahometans, as an equal enemy to the gospel; shall be reckoned by Mr. White one remove only from a Deist, because he was in his phrase a *Socinian*; i. e. because on the strictest and most serious examination of the Scriptures upon the subject, he could not find that Christ was any other than a human being, divinely and extraordinarily enlightened and impowered by Almighty God. I hope we shall hear no more general harangues against Socinianism and Socinians as such; lest they be found to be in reality pointed against the gospel and its divine founder himself.

Remark 5. Mr. White is very frequent in his assertions, that the cause of the rejection of the doctrine

doctrine of the Trinity and of the Divinity of Chriſt by unitarians, is merely becauſe they cannot account for it, nor reconcile it to reaſon. The chief cauſe however is, that they can find no ſuch doctrine concerning Chriſt in their Bibles, but intirely the contrary; and that they have taken ſome honeſt pains to come at the truth, the following account will ſhew; and whether they have attained it, the reader muſt judge.

A general ſketch of the Scripture-evidence, for, and againſt, the Preexiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt.

For the Preexiſtence of Chriſt.

Old Teſtament.

Iſaiah vii. 14. *Behold, a virgin ſhall conceive and bear a Son, and ſhall call his name Immanuel:* cited Matth. i. 23. See this explained p. 14.

—— ix. 6. *His name ſhall be called, wonderful, counſellor, the mighty God, the everlaſting Father, the prince of peace.* See p. 37, 38, 39, 40.

Againſt it.

Old Teſtament.

The prophecies which point out to the Iſraelites the promiſed Meſſiah, as a deſcendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, and family of David, and as a prophet, one of their brethren, like unto Moſes: theſe cannot be underſtood as referrible to any other than a human be-

For the Preexiſtence.

—— liii. 8. (*k*) Inſtead of—*who ſhall declare his generation?* it ſhould be tranſlated: *and the men of his generation who will be able to deſcribe?*

Micah v. *Whoſe goings forth have been from of old, from everlaſting.* See p. 105, 106, 107.

Malachi iii. 1. *The Lord, whom ye ſeek, ſhall ſuddenly come to his temple.*

The Lord here named, is not Chriſt; but Almighty God: who came to his temple, in or by Chriſt, his meſſenger and great prophet. See p. 104, 105.

Theſe are all the paſſages I know, in the

Againſt it.

ing; and as ſuch the jews conſtantly and uniformly looked for their Meſſiah. Gen. xxii. 18. xlix. 10. Deut. xviii. 15. 18. Iſai. xi. 1.

All thoſe paſſages, which ſpeak before of Chriſt, as receiving all his powers from God; and as being his *ſervant*; denominate him to be a creature, like all others, depending upon God for every thing. Iſ. xi. 2, 3. xlii. 11.

Thoſe texts which deſcribe beforehand his birth, his death, and burial, plainly and evidently define and beſpeak him a human being; and moſt certainly forbid the very thought

(*k*) See Biſhop Lowth upon the place: or rather ſee a New Tranſlation of Iſaiah, lii. 13.—liii. 12. in "Commentaries, "&c. by the Society for promoting the knowlege of the "Scriptures," p. 36. &c. Juſtin Martyr reckoned much upon this text for Chriſt's preexiſtence.

Old

For the Preexiſtence.

Old Teſtament, that are ſuppoſed to favour the preexiſtence of Chriſt. For I make no account of the chimerical Platonic idea of Juſtin Martyr; that Jeſus Chriſt was an inferior, created God, the delegate of the One Supreme: who, he ſuppoſes, never appeared or acted himſelf; but Chriſt for him.

Againſt it.

of his being God, or any thing but a limited, dependent creature. Micah v. 2. Iſaiah liii. 8, 9.

New Teſtament.

Matthew.

There is nothing in this evangeliſt, that gives the leaſt countenance to Chriſt being any other than the Great Prophet of God, the Meſſiah, with high powers from him; except i. 23. For which ſee p. 14.

New Teſtament.

Matthew.

This evangeliſt deſcribes the birth, life, and death of Chriſt, as of any other of the human race; and therefore affords no ground to conclude him to have been any other.

Mark.

There is no trace in this writer's account of

Mark.

In peruſing this ſacred writer, we ſee all Chriſt,

For the Preexiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt.

Chriſt, which is related to have been inſpected by the apoſtle Peter; as if he had any idea, that Chriſt had lived in any other world, but this.

Luke.

There appears nothing in this evangeliſt, which implies that he had any thought that Chriſt had exiſted in any other ſtate, before he was born at Bethlehem.

Againſt it.

cauſe to reverence the holy Jeſus, as a character of perfect goodneſs, indued with divine gifts and powers: but nothing to lift him up above the condition of a human creature ſo dignified by its Maker.

Luke.

Deſcribes Chriſt throughout, as one of the human race: born a ſenſeleſs infant at firſt; and acquiring knowlege and ſtrength with his years, like all others of mankind; applying to God for help on all occaſions, eſpecially under his extreme ſufferings, and having his prayer heard, and aſſiſtance given; and when expiring at laſt, reſigning his life to God, in full aſſurance of having it ſoon reſtored to him. Luke ii.

7.

For the Preexiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt.

Againſt it.

7. 16. 52. xxii. 43. (Heb. v. 7.) xxiii. 46.

John.

Through long prejudice, and inattention to the true meaning of Scripture-language, ſome parts of St. John's goſpel have been thought ſo much to favour the notion of Chriſt being God, and having lived in a former ſtate; that ſome perſons are ready to think ill of thoſe who can doubt of what appears to them ſo clear: but a proper inquiry, would ſhew them, how greatly they are miſtaken.

Texts in this evangeliſt ſuppoſed to prove Chriſt's preexiſtence.

John i. 1, 2. See p. 10, 11, 12. 138, 139; that it is God himſelf,

John.

There is a preſumption, though it be no proof, againſt John's teaching that Chriſt was a preexiſtent being, and the ſupreme God; becauſe the three other evangeliſts never mention any ſuch things in their goſpels, which they wrote for the inſtruction of the world after themſelves were dead, without knowing that John would write after them. If they had known or believed ſuch things concerning their Maſter Chriſt, it is not credible they would have concealed and not told them.

John having ſeen the writings of the other who

For the Preexiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt.

who is the *Word*, or Wiſdom here ſpoken of; and not Chriſt.

—— 15. *For he was before me*; i. e. was my principal; to whom I was to lead men.

—— 18. *No man hath ſeen God at any time: the well-beloved Son, who is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared him:* i. e. No man has a perfect knowlege of the will and deſigns of God for men, but myſelf.

iii. 13. is much the ſame as the above; highly figurative: as is his whole diſcourſe with Nicodemus. None ſuppoſes the *Son of man*, to have *literally* aſcended into heaven, or to have been there at all.

Againſt it.

evangeliſts, omits in general what had been before noted by them, and therefore ſays nothing of the birth and parentage of Jeſus, and the like: but mentions his mother and relations, and ſpeaks of his being weary and faint, and ſuffering and dying; circumſtances that belong to mortals, and to no other creatures that we know of. And as he records more of our Lord's own diſcourſes than the other evangeliſts, no one can avoid obſerving his continual declarations, that he received his being, his extraordinary knowlege, and all his powers from God: which ſhews, how very far Chriſt was

For the Preexiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt.	*Againſt it.*
vi. 6. is very highly figurative alſo. *The Son of man* had *literally* never been in heaven; whatever be to be underſtood by it.	from claiming to be any thing but a creature dependent upon God, and infinitely indebted to him for his favours.
viii. 42. See Pref. p. xiii.	
—— 58. See p. 24, 25, 26, 27.	
xvi. 28. See p. 48. and Pref. xiii.	
xvii. 5. See p. 162, 163.	
—— 8. *they have known of a certainty that* I came out from thee, *and they have believed that thou didſt* ſend *me.* The former clauſe is explained by the latter.	
The Acts.	*The Acts.*
In this ſecond treatiſe of St. Luke, ſo far is there from being any	It is remarkable, that this book which particularly treats of the thing

For the Preexiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt.

thing to prove Chriſt to have been the ſupreme God; that there is nothing whatſoever, which indicates him to have been any other than one of human kind, for his virtues highly promoted in the heavenly world.

Againſt it.

manner in which the goſpel was preached to the world after Chriſt's reſurrection and aſcenſion into heaven, diſtinctly informs us, that his apoſtles deſcribe him as a man, highly favoured by Almighty God, and nothing beyond this. Acts ii. 22. xvii. 24. 31. Chriſt alſo ſpeaks of himſelf, as having been a man, and nothing more. xxii. 8. In ſhort, if any one be diſpoſed to give names, he may call this a Socinian book, and St. Luke a Socinian.

Romans.

ix. 5. See p. 18, 19.

Romans.

This epiſtle begins with declaring Chriſt to have been a mortal man, but inveſted with extra-

For the Preexiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt.

Againſt it.

ordinary powers from God; and ſo continues throughout. See p. 157—160.

1 *Corinthians.*

i. 2. *With all that in every place,* call upon the name *of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* It ſhould be tranſlated—*with all that in every place* are called by the name *of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord:* viz. that are chriſtians. See Hammond.

x. 4. *They drank of that ſpiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Chriſt.* This is only a reference and alluſion, which the apoſtle makes to Chriſt; and no proof that Chriſt had any concern with the Iſraelites, or lived at that time.

1 *Corinthians.*

Throughout this epiſtle, Chriſt is ſpoken of as no other than a human being; the great prophet and lawgiver of the chriſtian church; who ſuffered death for the truth, but was ſoon raiſed to an immortal life, as a pledge to his followers of their being alſo raiſed from the grave in their appointed time. And the apoſtle in one place expreſsly declares, that Jeſus Chriſt was equally a man as Adam was. xv. 21, 22.

x. 9.

For the Preexiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt.

x. 9. *Neither let us tempt Chriſt, as ſome of them alſo tempted* (God,) *and were deſtroyed of ſerpents.* That the word *God*, here put in different characters, is to be underſtood, has been the opinion of good critics. But in ſome manuſcripts, the reading is—*Let us not tempt the Lord:* which is probably the true *reading.*

xv. 47. See p. 32.

Againſt it.

2 *Corinthians.*

viii. 9. *For ye know the grace* (or kindneſs towards us) *of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; that though he was rich*, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

2 *Corinthians:*

No one can read this epiſtle, but muſt ſee that God is one ſingle perſon; and Chriſt his great prophet, and lawgiver of his church, and the appointed future judge of all.

For the Preexiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt.

Chriſt's riches were the high powers and communications he had received from God; which he made no uſe of for his own eaſe or benefit, but ſolely for the good of others. There is no reference to any ſuppoſed powers in a former ſtate of exiſtence.

Againſt it.

Philippians.

ii. 5—9. See p. 76, 77. 164, 165.

Philippians.

ii. 5—9. This paſſage proves Chriſt to have been a human being; who received his great powers and dignity from Almighty God.

Coloſſians.

i. 16. p. 54—61.

Coloſſians.

See p. 54—61.

Hebrews.

i. 2. *God hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his Son, whom he*

Hebrews.

Of all the epiſtles of St. Paul, there is none in which he is ſo full

hath

For the Preexiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt.

hath appointed heir of all things; by whom alſo he made the worlds. This laſt ſhould be tranſlated —*By* or *for the ſake of whom, he conſtituted the ages.* See Dr. Doddridge on the place.

——3. *Who being the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon.*—See p. 140.

——*But unto the Son he ſaith*; Thy throne, o God, is *for ever and ever.* It ſhould rather be tranſlated: *But concerning the Son he ſaith,* God is thy throne *for ever and ever.*

ii. 14. 16. *Foraſmuch then as the children are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf* likewiſe took part of the ſame. *For verily he* took not on him the

Againſt it.

and particular in deſcribing our Lord as a human being, like others of mankind, as in this to the Hebrews: *viz,* that he was equally mortal; was placed here upon his trial, as we are; and diſciplined and made perfect thereby: ii. 9, 10. 14. 18. iv. 15. v. 7, 8, 9. xii. 2.

For the Preexiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt.

nature of *angels*; *but he took on him the ſeed of Abraham.* It ſhould have been tranſlated: *Foraſmuch then as the children are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf* in like manner was a partaker of the ſame. *For verily he* helpeth not *angels*; *but he* helpeth *the ſeed of Abraham.*

xiii. 8. *Jeſus Chriſt, the ſame yeſterday, and to-day, and for ever.* See p. 43.

Againſt it.

1 *Peter.*

i. 11. *Searching what, or what manner of time* the ſpirit of Chriſt *which was in them did ſignify, when it teſtified beforehand the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glory that ſhould follow. The ſpi-*

1 *Peter.*

It is not poſſible to read this epiſtle without ſeeing, that Jeſus Chriſt is as diſtinct from God, as a creature ſubject to death, can be from its creator. But then it alſo appears, that

rit

For the Preexiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt.

Againſt it.

rit of Chriſt in the prophets, was not, properly ſpeaking, any power of Chriſt, but of God himſelf, by which they were enabled to declare things to come. And it is called *the ſpirit of Chriſt*, becauſe Chriſt was the object about whom it is here ſaid to be employed; in the ſame manner, as the miraculous power to be communicated to the apoſtles, Joh. xiv. 17. is called the *ſpirit of truth*, becauſe it was to teſtify that the doctrines delivered by them were true.

(*l*) iii. 19. 20. *By which* (ſpirit, or power of God,) *after he was gone* (into heaven) the bleſſed Jeſus had been one highly diſtinguiſhed by Almighty God, and deſigned before his birth to fill a moſt important ſtation in the moral world, to promote the virtue and happineſs of the whole human race, by his divine inſtructions and exemplary holineſs, fortitude and integrity, in dying in the cauſe of truth. i. 19. 20. 21. iv. 11. 19. v, 10. 11.

(*l*) I give this obſcure text, with ſome addition, in other characters, to explain its meaning: for which ſee the moſt judicious commentators; particularly Beauſobre.

For the Preexiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt.

heaven) *he preached* (by his apoſtles) *to the ſpirits in priſon* (i. e. to the heathen world, men of the ſame race with thoſe,) *which at one time were diſobedient, when the long ſuffering of God waited in the days of Noah,* i. e. during that patriarch's preaching to them. But now he would have it inferred, the caſe was different: many of theſe heathens repented at the preaching of the goſpel.

Againſt it.

1 *John.*

iv. 2. 3. *Every ſpirit that confeſſeth that Jeſus Chriſt* is come in the fleſh, *is of God. And every ſpirit that confeſſeth not that Jeſus Chriſt is* come in fleſh, *is not of God.* To come in the

1 *John.*

fleſh,

For the Preexiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt.	*Againſt it.*
fleſh, is to be a mortal man, liable to ſufferings and death. And this is ſaid by the apoſtle againſt ſome chriſtians who denied this.	
Revelation of St. John. I am Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt. See p. 27. 28.	*Revelation.*
ii. 8. *Theſe things ſaith the firſt and the laſt; which was dead, and is alive.* See as above.	

1. The reader will obſerve in the preceding ſketch, the vaſt amount of Scripture-evidence which there is for Jeſus Chriſt being a mortal man; and neither the ſupreme God, nor a great angelic ſpirit, the maker of the world under God:

2. That Matthew, Mark, and Luke, appear to have lived and died, without knowing that Jeſus was any thing more than their Great expected Prophet, and meſſenger of the divine will to mankind for their final happineſs and ſalvation; which may reaſonably give men pauſe, and make them

them reflect; whether they are not mistaken in their interpretations of the writings of their fellow-evangelist, when they make him maintain that Christ was the most high God:

3. That this evangelist, St. John, the favourite disciple, in the general strain of his history, speaks of Christ, as being a dependent creature, receiving life and every thing from God, even more than the other evangelists; and that those few passages in comparison, in his gospel, which have been supposed to declare him to have been a preexistent spirit, or the supreme God; are, in general, capable of a most easy solution, and may be shewn to relate to his office and dignity from God, in being his highly favoured creature, messenger and servant, and not the supreme Being himself, or a subordinate God and creator under him: where men will attend to the connection of the discourse, to the idiom of the language, and the sense, and not merely the sound of the words made use of:

4. That St. Paul, in his famous speech at Athens, before the court of Areopagus, as well as in all his epistles; sometimes directly asserts, that Jesus Christ was merely one of the human race, raised up for the greatest purposes, for the benefit of mankind, which he nobly answered, and was therefore exalted to honour; and never at any time, says any thing inconsistent with this, or

which

which might argue our Lord to have been God, or any thing above the condition of a human being, ſo diſtinguiſhed by the ſupreme Father:

5. That the ſame may be averred of the epiſtles of the other apoſtles; and of the *Revelation* of St. John:

And, if, upon the whole, a few paſſages ſhould not appear to be ſatisfactorily cleared up and ſolved, yet a wiſe man will judge of a point ſo important, by the general tenour of a book or diſcourſe; by what is plain, evident and uncontrovertible; and will always be decided by the greater weight of evidence.

I would therefore now aſk Mr. Profeſſor White, and many others; who betray ſuch a profound ignorance of what Deiſm, Chriſtianity, and that which they term Socinianiſm, really is; and who by ſuch little paltry arts and inſinuations affect to depreciate the integrity, ſimplicity, and general character of thoſe againſt whom they write: whether ſuch men as the late excellent Dr. Lardner, and thoſe who now are in his ſentiments concerning Jeſus Chriſt, which they believe on the grounds offered above, to have been the very ſentiments and doctrine of the apoſtles concerning *the perſon* of their lord and maſter, Jeſus; whether they are to be calumniated as enemies to the goſpel, and inſinuations thrown out in the dark without proofs of their uſing

ſiniſter

ſiniſter means to ſupport their peculiar opinion? whether the doctrine of Chriſt being truly and properly man, and not God, be not as favourable to piety, and virtue, as the contrary, nay more favourable; though this is not the proper criterion by which the point is to be decided? whether they who maintain this opinion, do not manifeſt an equal love of truth, and zeal for the goſpel, with thoſe who hold the contrary? whether alſo they do not hold forth to others the grand peculiarity of the goſpel, the hope of an eternal exiſtence after death, with God and Chriſt, and all virtuous and good beings; and whether their own lives do not appear to be regulated and governed by this hope, as much as thoſe of their opponents?

It is to be hoped, that ingenuous men, and ſcholars, will inform themſelves better, and change their language; leſt they give room for ſuſpicion, that they are influenced by other motives, than thoſe that belong to the honeſt man, and the chriſtian.

The late Lord Barrington, in one part of his works, paſſes the following cenſure on ſome controverſial writers of his time, which contains hints and admonitions, worthy the attention of many in our day. "I (*m*) cannot but have a very

(*m*) Miſcellanea Sacra. Vol. i. p. 157, 158. ed. 1770. I am obliged to the laſt valuable edition of the *Biographia*, under the article *Barrington*, for this citation.

"mean

" mean opinion (ſays this truly noble perſon) of
" writers, who will put on the appearance of
" aſſurance and certainty, that they may carry
" the guiſe of perfect knowlege and judgment
" to the bulk of their readers, in points where
" they are far from being at that certainty which
" they affect ſo much to be thought to have;
" and every one muſt have a much worſe opinion
" of thoſe who give themſelves the air, only to
" ſerve party or private views. The firſt pro-
" ceeds from a degree of pride to which human
" nature is too eaſily carried; while the ſecond
" ariſes from a degree of diſhoneſty that has
" been contracted by lower arts of it repeated
" from time to time, till it has grown habitual,
" and ends in venturing on *this high injury to*
" *mankind. The firſt moral virtues of a writer are*
" *to diveſt himſelf of theſe enormous paſſions; to*
" *ſearch for truth alone, and to propoſe it to his*
" *reader, with that degree of evidence or certainty,*
" *of doubt or difficulty, which it has in his own*
" *mind: conſidering himſelf as accountable to God*
" *for miſleading any man by the ſuperiority of his*
" *talents; and as accountable to his reader, for the*
" *inſolence of endeavouring to impoſe on him, by the*
" *means of any real or imagined advantage he has*
" *over him.* If theſe virtues were practiſed by
" every writer, we ſhould receive more profit
" from the beſt, and leaſt harm from the worſt,

" than

" than we now reap from either of them; and " writing would then be in the beſt ſtate that this " ſtate of imperfection would allow *."

* The following extract of a letter from this nobleman, who was himſelf a Diſſenter, to Dr. Lardner, ſhews on what intimate terms they converſed together, and is inſerted here as it does equal honour to the memories of both of them. ——" Thus I think our controverſy ends. But our friend- " ſhip and correſpondence I hope never will, but with our " lives. And our friendſhip, I hope then, but for a ſeaſon. " I have had ſo much ſatisfaction and inſtruction from your " great learning and judgment, and from your patience, " candour, openneſs, and obliging manners, that whenever " I have difficulties to put, in the future courſe of my en- " quiries, or want to ſee what difficulties my ſentiments are " liable to, I ſhall take the liberty to trouble you, unleſs " you forbid me; or (if your great civility will not allow " you to do that) I forbear, from the ſenſe I have, of how " much I rob the world, in the reſult of the learned pur- " ſuits they juſtly expect from you, by ſuch kinds of inter- " ruptions as thoſe I have given you." Memoirs of the life and writings of Dr. Lardner, p. 41.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

Thoſe whom Mr. *Profeſſor* White *calls* Socinians, *are known greatly to differ from* Socinus *in many things; particularly in not paying religious worſhip to* Jeſus Chriſt, *or praying to him: which was a point that* Fauſtus Socinus *vehemently inſiſted on, though he conſidered* Chriſt *as a man only, with divine powers conferred upon him. If ſuch are to be diſtinguiſhed by any other name, than that of* Chriſtians, *one, who can ſpeak for many of them, would ſay, that they are* Unitarian *chriſtians; as holding* the unity of God *in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, to the excluſion of* Jeſus Chriſt, *and of every other Perſon whatſoever, from being named or compared with* The Supreme Father, *as equal to him, or as any thing but dependent on* HIM; WHO IS THE BLESSED AND ONLY POTENTATE, THE KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS; WHO ONLY HATH IMMORTALITY; DWELLING IN LIGHT UNAPPROACHABLE; WHOM NO MAN HATH SEEN, NOR CAN SEE: TO WHOM BE HONOUR AND POWER EVERLASTING. AMEN. 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.

ERRATA.

Page 85. *for* Gacius *read* Gaius.
——97. l. 15. *for* give into the weakneſs, &c. *put* fall greatly below himſelf.
——l. 28. *for* to be hereafter *put* as above.
——115. l. 10. *del.* ſimilar to them.
——197. l. 6. from the bottom, inſert Titus ii. 13. 14.

INTRODUCTION.

IN reviewing and examining this "Plea for the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ," I have lamented to see a great deal of pains and ingenuity wasted, as it appears to me, in supporting popular errors; which might have been usefully employed in illustrating and propagating the genuine truth of the gospel.

It was also a continual mortification, to find the whole strain of the sacred writings, which relate to God and to Christ, mistaken, and turned from their true meaning, to exhibit Jesus Christ as being *truly and properly God*; where the writers, or Christ himself, whose words are sometimes quoted, never thought of any thing of the kind.

And it has been an infinite drudgery to go over again an old beaten track, in remarking numberless misrepresentations of the Scriptures, and *false readings* of them cited as *genuine*, which are well known to scholars; and which one wonders should have escaped a person, who had advantages of being better informed.

When an author steps forth, and boldly maintains Jesus Christ to be the God over all, after so much written and demonstrated to the contrary, by our Clarke, and Whiston, by Whitby, (*a*) Peirce,

(*a*) These pious conscientious men, Whitby and Peirce, two of the most learned men of the learned age in which they lived, are remarkable for having been at first strenuous maintainers of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the divinity of Christ; but by their own honest enquiries and the strong force of evidence, they were brought to see their error, and publicly confessed it. In Whiston's memoirs of his own life, (Vol. I. p. 139.) there is a curious letter of Peirce's to him,

Peirce, &c; not to mention celebrated names, Ben Mordecai, and others, ſtill living; he will be ſure to find admirers and favourers of one claſs or other, according to the ſtile of his compoſition, ſo long as what he pleads for is the eſtabliſhed and prevailing doctrine. And as too many are diſpoſed to hold the book laſt publiſhed if no reply be made to it, incapable of being confuted; ſome good *Philadelphian* ſhould have undertaken the taſk however tedious and irkſome: to ſhew this writer his miſtakes; to undeceive the ignorant and unwary, who may have been miſled by him; and to vindicate the incommunicable, peculiar honour and worſhip, due to the only true God and Father of all, to the excluſion of all other beings or perſons whatſoever throughout the univerſe, and eſpecially of *him*, whom chriſtians have forced into a throne of equality with the ſupreme Father, but than whom none could be farther (*b*) from claiming ſuch honour, *Jeſus*, (*c*) *the prophet of Nazareth, of Galilee.*

to bring him back to the orthodox faith. Whitby confuted Biſhop Bull's arguments for the Trinity, in his Diſquiſitiones modeſtæ, and in his anſwers to Waterland. The latter of theſe tracts being in Engliſh, together with his LAST THOUGHTS, or retractation of his Trinitarian ſentiments, ſhould be bound up and ſold along with his Paraphraſe and Notes on the New Teſtament, that the readers may have the benefit of the author's maturer judgment, and juſtice be done to him, and to them.

(*b*) Matth. xxi. 11. xi. 29. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.* xix. 16, 17. *Behold one came and ſaid unto him,* good *maſter, what good thing ſhall I do that I may have eternal life? And he ſaid unto him,* why calleſt thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is God.* Chriſt here manifeſtly owns his dependance upon God, and diſclaims his having any thing good in himſelf, but what he received from the almighty Parent of him and of all.

(*c*) Matth. xxi. 11. Our Lord did not blame the people for proclaiming him under this title; but the contrary.

I have long wondred, that a treatiſe ſo juſtly reprehenſible on many accounts, as this will appear to be, has not been animadverted upon by ſome judicious and liberal hand in that famous ſeat of learning, in the neighbourhood of which Mr. Robinſon has his abode. I was the more induced to expect it from a local conſideration, which concerns themſelves, and is not, I believe, much known abroad. For although this gentleman is a Miniſter among the Diſſenters in the town of Cambridge, his book was much circulated and recommended, in the Univerſity, at its firſt publication 1776, by ſome perſons of the eſtabliſhed church, who were glad to lay hold of any reed however ſlender, to ſupport a tottering cauſe, and to guard the youth of the place againſt the opinions and writings of ſome of their own body, who had openly aſſerted and made many converts to the belief of the ſtrict unity of the Supreme Cauſe and Author of all things.

When I at any time inquired, why no notice was taken from the Preſs of this new *Plea*, which had much vogue at the firſt; all I could learn was, that it was looked upon as ſo very ſuperficial, and had ſo little argument in it, that it could not long deceive any one, and needed no confutation.

But this reaſon of ſome able ingenious men for declining to lay a juſt account of the weakneſs of the performance before the Public, proceeded from the want of a proper attention to thoſe who would be moſt likely to be miſguided by it, and from meaſuring others too much by the ſize of their own underſtandings. For as it is written with great ſmartneſs and an air of triumph, and deals throughout in aſſertions without proofs; this method, however diſguſting to every intelligent mind, is peculiarly calculated to win upon the unlearned, and

thoſe who are unaccuſtomed or unwilling to be at the trouble of judging for themſelves; whom nevertheleſs it would have been right and neceſſary to have put upon their guard.

There is moreover ſomething very impoſing, and that would weigh more than a thouſand arguments with common readers, in the very poſitive and deciſive tone with which our author ſpeaks, where the ſtrength of his argument often but ill ſupports him; and alſo in the liberties he takes in cenſuring even the apoſtles and their writings, if they are not to be underſtood and interpreted, in the way that he preſumes they ought to be.

It will ſuffice to give one ſpecimen here; as others will unavoidably preſent themſelves in the courſe of our inquiry.

After having produced divers texts of Scripture, to ſhew that the perfections of God, which are aſcribed to Jeſus Chriſt, prove him to be the Supreme God; but without any argument to ſhew, that the inſtances brought by him are real divine perfections, or that they really belong to Chriſt; he thus pronounces upon them, p. 17.

" If they who aſcribe the perfections of Deity " to Jeſus Chriſt, have fallen into an error, they " may have been led into it by the writers of the " New Teſtament.—If Jeſus Chriſt be God, the " aſcription of the perfections of God to him is " proper: IF HE BE NOT, THE APOSTLES ARE " CHARGEABLE WITH WEAKNESS OR WICKED- " NESS, and either would deſtroy their claim of " inſpiration."

The few who examine and decide for themſelves, are not to be dazzled and over-awed by theſe confident declarations, knowing that mortals are oftentimes moſt ignorant, where they are moſt preſumptuous and aſſured. But it is not ſo with others;

others; eſpecially if their prejudices lean that way already. Such violent language overpowers them before they are aware of it, and puts an end to all cool and fair inquiry, ſo that they will hear no reaſon from thoſe of a contrary ſentiment; and it will be well, if even their reſentments are not inſtantly kindled againſt them. And though Mr. Robinſon is not unmindful to inſtill principles of benevolence and kindneſs towards fellow-chriſtians of different religious perſuaſions, his admirers will be in danger of becoming bad ſcholars under him, by ſuch ſtrong paintings of the fatal conſequences to the moral characters of the apoſtles and to the divine authority of their writings, which reſult, according to him, from denying Chriſt to be God.

It may be doubted whether upon any ſubject or occaſion, theſe vehement oratorical expreſſions, tending to inflame the paſſions, ought to be uſed: but they ought ſurely to have no place in diſquiſitions of ſo ſerious a nature as that in queſtion; *viz.* "whether the Scriptures teach Jeſus Chriſt to be "the Supreme God, or a creature." Here every one ſhould be left to form his judgment calmly according to evidence, and to be wholly indifferent with reſpect to conſequences, on which ſide of the balance the truth falls.

SECTION I.

Whether the ſacred writers ſpeak of God, in peculiar, appropriated terms.

THERE is one obſervation, with which our author ſets out, and often recurs to, and which will appear plauſible at firſt ſight; but is nevertheleſs a capital miſtake. This is, the ſuppoſition taken up by him, that the ſacred writers

were exceedingly careful and exact in the terms in which they ſpeak concerning GOD, not to apply them to any others but to HIM alone; leſt they ſhould give occaſion to and countenance idolatry and the worſhip of a multiplicity of gods, to which the world was then, and has ever been moſt prone.

" If Jeſus Chriſt (ſays he, p. 9) were not God, " the writers of the New Teſtament diſcovered " great injudiciouſneſs in the choice of their words, " and adopted a very incautious and dangerous " ſtile.——Paul and Barnabas had ſeen a miracle " and a ſermon procure an offer of their own deifi- " cation at Lyſtra; and the general deſcription of " the heathens afforded them a ſtrong probability " that the hiſtory of Jeſus Chriſt, which is made " up of miracles and ſermons, expreſſive of extra- " ordinary wiſdom and power, would procure a " deification alſo of him.——We naturally expect " that men who *rent their clothes* (Acts xiv.) in " abhorrence of confounding the creature with the " Creator, ſhould expreſs the nature of God, and " the natures of all creatures, in the moſt circum- " ſpect language. In ſpeaking of Jeſus Chriſt, where " the temptation to idolatry was the ſtrongeſt, we " naturally expect a more than ordinary caution: " the caſe required it."

In making remarks of this kind, perſons ſhould beware of indulging imagination, and taking upon them beforehand to preſcribe and determine what *ought to be* the conduct of Divine Providence, till they have examined and ſeen what is the *real fact*, and the language of the prophets of God, concerning his adoreable majeſty: And it happens to be quite the reverſe of what our author lays down and decides in ſo peremptory a manner.

For, on a peruſal of the books both of the Old and New Teſtament, we immediately diſcover, that the

the writers uſe not any cautious management or curious nicety in their phraſes concerning the Great God and other beings, his creatures. They never ſeem to have been under any apprehenſions, that they, for whoſe immediate uſe they compoſed their writings, ſhould ever miſtake, or forget the ſacred everlaſting diſtinction and infinite diſtance, between the Great Creator, and any one, however highly gifted and favoured, whom they mention along with him; or that from any ambiguity of expreſſion uſed by them; or application of the ſame terms, or aſſignment of the ſame acts, to Moſes, to Chriſt, or to any other; they ſhould be led to conclude, that there was any other Perſon, who was Jehovah, *truly and properly God*, but the ſingle Perſon of the Father, the Almighty Maker and Governor of all things. Thus

(*b*) " 1. Moſes is ſaid to be a God, *Exod.* vii. 1. *And the* LORD *ſaid to* Moſes; *See, I have made thee a God unto Pharaoh.* And iv. 16. *Thou* (Moſes) *ſhalt be to him inſtead of God.*

" 2. Moſes is prayed unto, and that to forgive ſins, *Numb.* xii. 11. *And* Aaron *ſaid unto* Moſes; *Alas, my Lord, I beſeech thee, lay not this ſin upon us, wherein we have done fooliſhly, and wherein we have ſinned.* There is the like again in *Exod.* x. 16, 17. where Pharaoh calleth for Moſes and Aaron, and ſaith; *I have ſinned againſt the* LORD *your God, and againſt you. Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my ſin only this once,* &c.

" 3. Moſes is worſhiped, *Exod.* xi. 8. *All theſe thy ſervants ſhall come down unto me, and bow down themſelves unto me,* or *worſhip* me, as the word ſignifies.

(*b*) Theſe remarks I find ready made to my hand, in the remains of a reſpectable Engliſh writer, a moſt pious and virtuous man; who ſuffered in the cauſe of the Divine Unity, in the laſt century, dying in a loathſome jail.

" 4. It is said of Moses, *Exod.* xxxii. that he brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, ver. 7. *And the* LORD *said unto Moses, go, get thee down; for thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves:* and xxxiii. 1. But in the preface to the ten commandments, *Exod.* xx. 1, 2. *God spake all these words saying,* I AM THE LORD THY GOD, *which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt.* See also Deut. v. 6.

" It is said, the *Israelites* did believe in *Moses* as well as the LORD, *Exod.* xiv. 31. *And Israel saw that great work which the* LORD *did upon the Egyptians, and the people feared the* LORD, *and believed the* LORD *and his servant Moses*; (Heb. *believed in the* LORD *and in Moses his servant.*) Again, *Exod.* xix. 9. *Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever*; (Heb. *believe in thee.*)"

This single specimen is sufficient to evidence the weakness of our author's assertion, concerning the supposed reserve used by the sacred writers, in never speaking of the Great God, but in such language as was appropriated to him alone. And it shews how little is to be inferred, towards the proving Christ to be God, from what is attributed to God in one place, being attributed to Christ in another; because, according to the same way of arguing, we may prove Moses also to be God. But there will be frequent occasion to note the fallacious conclusions into which this unhappy mistake, and stumble at the very threshold, has led this writer.

SECTION II.

Whether Jesus Christ is the Supreme God?

HOWEVER formidable the undertaking, I only speak as to the irksomeness of it, I shall not

not decline the labour of surveying and weighing one by one, I must not say Mr. Robinson's *proofs* of the Deity of Christ, but his allegations of Scripture-words and phrases, of similar sound and appearance, applied to Christ, with those ascribed to God himself; from which he would have it inferred, that Christ is the Supreme God.

That I may not misrepresent or injure him, I shall commonly give his own words, printed also exactly in his own way.

Under his first head, to shew "that the writers "of the New Testament meant to inform their "readers, that JESUS CHRIST IS TRULY AND PROPERLY GOD (*d*);"—I take up (says he) the New "Testament, and read these words of truth and "soberness, in which the Holy Ghost teacheth me "the nature of Jesus Christ; and I find these "propositions.

"*The Word was* GOD. John i. 1. GOD *was manifest in the flesh.* 1 Tim. iii. 16. *His name is* "*Emanuel,* GOD *with us.* Matth. i. 23. *John turned* "*many to* THE LORD THEIR GOD. Luke i. 16. "*The Jews crucified* THE LORD OF GLORY. 1 Cor. "ii. 8. GOD *purchased the church with his blood.* "Acts xx. 28. *Jesus Christ is* LORD OF ALL. Acts "x. 36. *Christ is* OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR "EVER. Rom. ix. 5. *We shall all stand before the* "*judgment seat of* CHRIST, *so every one of us shall* "*give account of himself to* GOD. Rom. xiv. 10. 12."

Nothing more is offered; no interpretation or illustration of these texts; no argument to shew that they are applicable to his purpose: only a laboured descanting upon them in a general way, in the following, and the like high terms, contrived to captivate the incautious unlearned reader:—

(*d*) Mr. Robinson's Plea, &c. p. 10.

"By

" By the richeſt words (ſays he) in this copious " language, (the Greek) the New Teſtament-" writers deſcribe Jeſus Chriſt. The language " would have afforded lower terms to expreſs an " inferior nature: but it could have afforded none " higher to expreſs the nature of the Supreme God."

His firſt inſtance then, in proof of Jeſus being the ſupreme God, which he alleges, is;

John i. 1. *The Word was* GOD.

And he ſuppoſes, it will be taken as a thing quite certain, upon his word, for he offers no argument in its ſupport; that by the term, *Word*, logos, Chriſt is intended; and that theſe words of the evangeliſt contain an expreſs declaration of Chriſt being the Supreme God.

But no one who would act a wiſe and reaſonable part, ſhould take up a belief, without very great and ſtrong proof, that a Jew by deſcent, and education, like the apoſtle, owning Moſes for a divine lawgiver, could begin his book with declaring, what was never known or publiſhed before; viz. that there was another perſon, who was Jehovah, the Supreme God, and Creator of all things, beſides the one Jehovah, God of Iſrael, by whom Moſes profeſſed himſelf to be ſent; and thus aſſert two Jehovahs, two Creators, where Moſes had aſſerted but one, and the prophets after him had declared no other: all of them uſing the words He, Him, Thou, Thee, when ſpeaking of him or to him; and I, me, when this Being is himſelf introduced ſpeaking; terms which admit of no plurality of perſons whatſoever; and eſpecially, that this ſame writer ſhould begin with declaring Jeſus to be THE TRUE GOD, when he ſoon after deſcribes Jeſus, in a ſolemn act of prayer, invoking the Father as THE ONLY TRUE GOD; and declaring his own higheſt character, and moſt

moſt honourable diſtinction, to be that of being *ſent by him*, his meſſenger. John xvii. 3.

Such contradictory aſſertions belong not to the ſacred writings; but are the offspring of unhappy prejudice, and of human contrivance and authority: otherwiſe it would eaſily have been perceived by all, that it is not Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Word, the Logos, here intended, but God himſelf; who is denominated and characterized by his attribute of Wiſdom, or his commanding word and energy, which gave birth to all things; as in other places of Scripture, by other attributes. Thus God *is love*. 1 John iv. 16. God *is light*. 1 John i. 5. By this laſt, the apteſt and moſt ſtriking emblem in nature, the ſacred writer would denote his moſt perfect wiſdom and knowledge. Such language is readily underſtood, and without difficulty applied in theſe inſtances: and why not here, in that before us?

Writers alſo of oppoſite ſentiments on this ſubject, have ſeen and owned, that St. John in uſing this language, has a reference to Proverbs viii. where *Wiſdom*, though brought in as a Divine Perſon ſpeaking and acting, is acknowleged to be nothing but an attribute of the Supreme Mind; and the whole of that proſopopoeia or perſonification in Solomon, is conſidered in no other light than as a beautiful animated deſcription of the God and Creator of all things, acting every where by the rules of the moſt conſummate wiſdom. And what ſhould hinder us from interpreting the apoſtle here in like manner; not as introducing a new Supreme God, called the Word, Logos, quite unknown before, and never named by the other three evangeliſts; but aſſerting, that all things were made by God, at firſt, with the moſt perfect wiſdom; and that from the ſame ſource of the divine wiſdom, all the

the different communications of light and inſtruction to mankind have been derived ſince; eſpecially that beſt and chief of all, which we have by Jeſus Chriſt?

And that this is the intent of the introductory part of his goſpel, St. John himſelf explains to us, if we only have the patience to liſten to him. For having aſſerted with that ſimplicity of ſtile for which he is remarkable; *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God*—he immediately ſubjoins (ſhewing himſelf incapable of a thought that there was any perſon, who was God, but one;) *and the Word was* GOD; or as, rather more agreeably with the original, the ſentence might be tranſpoſed, *and* GOD *was the Word:* viz. that *Word*, of which he was ſpeaking, was none other than God himſelf. It was his Word, or Wiſdom, by which all things were made; which planned all the divine councils and deſigns, thoſe eſpecially that related to the human race, and their deliverance out of their dark and degenerate ſtate by Jeſus Chriſt; to whom a portion of this wiſdom was in an extraordinary manner imparted, ſufficient to enable him to act the great part aſſigned to him. Which is the meaning of verſe 14. that follows; *and the Word was* (*e*) *made fleſh, and dwelt among us*, &c. i. e. This wiſdom was communicated to a mortal, dwelt in the man Chriſt Jeſus, and was by him diſpenſed to the world (*f*.)

(*e*) It ſhould rather be tranſlated, *the Word* was *fleſh*, ο λογος σαρξ εγενετο, as before verſe 6. εγενετο ανθρωπος, *there* was *a man ſent*, &c.

(*f*) Our author in a ſubſequent part of his work, has theſe words: p. 62.

"I appeal to any one of you, my brethren,——Whether "theſe conſiderations ought not to induce us to allow St. "John's propoſition; He WHO WAS MADE *fleſh*, *was* GOD."

But it has been juſt now ſhewn, how far the apoſtle is from aſſerting any thing ſo very degrading, concerning the Supreme Being.

Mr.

Mr. Robinſon next introduces

1 Tim. iii. 16. God *was manifeſt in the fleſh.*

And here alſo it muſt be taken upon truſt from him, for he aſſigns no proof of it, that Chriſt is the God of whom the apoſtle ſpeaks. But others will conſider, that in agreement with the common phraſeology of Scripture, as well as with the preceding interpretation of *The Word* being *made fleſh*, &c. it may be aſſerted of the Almighty, inviſible God, even the Father, that he *was manifeſt in the fleſh*; that is, was made known in a manner truly glorious and worthy of him, by the communications of his wiſdom and power which were given to the man Chriſt Jeſus, and by the diſcoveries and revelations which this his honoured inſtrument, great prophet and meſſenger, was thereby impowered to make of the divine will and benignity; and all this in perfect conſiſtence with, nay in no other way to be explained than by Chriſt being truly and properly man, a creature of God, and *not* truly and properly God; which our author would hence infer him to be.

In the ſame way of ſpeaking, the ſame apoſtle aſſerts, 2 Cor. v. 19. *God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world to himſelf*; or as the ſame thing is expreſſed in the preceding verſe, *God hath reconciled us to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt*; i. e. Chriſt was God's inſtrument in bringing men to holineſs and the divine favour for ever.

This eaſy explanation may be given of the apoſtle's language, even as our author has quoted it, without countenancing ſuch concluſion as he would draw from it. But after the ſtrict, impartial ſcrutiny that has been made in the preſent century concerning the paſſage, and eſpecially by the labours and reſearches of Sir Iſaac Newton, Wetſtein, Grieſbach, &c. upon it, the learned in ge-

neral are convinced, that the apoſtle wrote, not, GOD *was manifeſt in the fleſh*, but, WHICH *was manifeſt in the fleſh*, referring to the myſtery of godlineſs he had immediately before mentioned. Of this our author ſhould not have been ignorant, nor his readers unapprized.

Then follows Matth. i. 23.

His name is Emanuel, GOD *with us* (*g*).

Mr. Robinſon again preſumes his reader will put implicit confidence in him, that this text is an evidence of Chriſt being the ſupreme God: for he offers not a tittle to make it out.

The words are cited by the evangeliſt from Iſaiah vii. 14. where they immediately relate to a child, that was to be born at that time; and no more prove Chriſt to be God, than they prove the like of the child ſo deſcribed by the prophet. But as that child, who was to be called *Immanuel*, GOD *with us*, was not therefore God; but ſo called, to ſignify according to the known idiom of the Hebrew prophetic writings, that God would at that time afford his peculiar preſence and aſſiſtance to Ahaz: ſo the application of the ſame name and phraſe, *Immanuel*, GOD *with us*, to the child Jeſus, implies not that *he was God:* but only that God would manifeſt himſelf and his goodneſs, in an extraordinary manner, by him.

We have afterwards, Luke i. 16.

John turned many to THE LORD THEIR GOD.

This quotation upon the face of it certainly needed ſome explanation from our author, though none is given, to ſhew how it applies to Chriſt, and proves him to be the ſupreme God. For it is ſo

(*g*) The words in the evangeliſt are; *Behold, a virgin ſhall be with child, and ſhall bring forth a ſon, and they ſhall call his name,* or *he ſhall be called, Emanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us.*

far

far from being ſelf evident, that it is not eaſy to diſcover, in what way Mr. Robinſon can make out what he muſt be ſuppoſed here to intend, *viz.* that Chriſt is THE LORD GOD, to whom many were to be converted by John the Baptiſt: for Chriſt is not at all referred to or mentioned. Perhaps it is preſumed, that he is the perſon *intended* here, from the verſe immediately following, which is capable of being applied to him, *viz. And he ſhall go before him in the ſpirit and power of Elias*; and that this indicates Chriſt to be THE LORD GOD before named, as the Baptiſt was to be his forerunner. But though John the Baptiſt went before Chriſt in the ſpirit and power of Elias, he may in a juſt ſenſe be ſaid alſo to go before the Lord God himſelf, becauſe in and by Chriſt the Lord God appeared and manifeſted himſelf. So that John might turn many to Chriſt, and turn them at the ſame time to the Lord their God, without making Chriſt, God; or any thing but his great prophet, and meſſenger.

He next produces 1 Cor. ii. 8.

The Jews crucified THE LORD OF GLORY.

The fact is unqueſtionably true; but what argument this language affords that Chriſt is God, the author tells not, but would have it taken for certain on his authority, that ſtiling Chriſt the *Lord of glory* was the ſame as ſtiling him the ſupreme God, and that the apoſtle here declares, in other words, that *the Jews crucified* GOD.

But in whatever ſenſe Chriſt is called *Lord*, it is to be remembered that he is ſuch, merely by the conſtitution and appointment of God. For the apoſtle Peter in his firſt diſcourſe after our Lord's reſurrection, ſays (Acts ii. 36.) *Therefore let all the houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly, that* GOD hath made

made *that ſame Jeſus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Chriſt.*

Beſides, St. Paul, in this place, is far from intending to ſpeak of Chriſt, as any other than an excellent creature, highly gifted and honoured by Almighty God. In the preceding ver. 7. deſcribing the true glory of a chriſtian, in oppoſition to the vaunting and boaſting which was among the Corinthian converts, on account of the pretended ſuperior eloquence and talents of an ambitious man among them, whom they would ſet up in preference to the apoſtle; *We ſpeak* (ſays he) *the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, even the hidden wiſdom which God ordained before the world, unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the* LORD OF GLORY: that is to ſay, in other words; "Why do ye make diviſions by glorying as ye "do in your teachers for their fine rhetorical "abilities and learning? The glory that God has "ordained for us teachers and profeſſors of the "goſpel, is to be the preachers and expounders "of thoſe revealed truths and benevolent pur- "poſes of God, which though contained in the "Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, were not un- "derſtood in former ages. To teach this wiſdom, "is all the glory that belongs to us; and it is "what none of the rulers of this age attended to; "for otherwiſe they would not have crucified *the* "*Lord of glory*; would not have put *him* to a "violent unjuſt death, who was the Lord, the "giver, the diſpenſer of this glory and honour "of which we boaſt." See Locke and Pearce upon the paſſage.

Next comes Acts xx. 28.

GOD *purchaſed the church with his blood.*

It

It is well known, that the beſt and moſt antient manuſcript copies of the New Teſtament read here; *feed the church*, not *of God*, but *of the Lord*, (i. e. of Chriſt) *which he hath purchaſed with his blood*; and ſo alſo it is cited by the moſt antient chriſtian writers.

How can our author leave his readers unacquainted with a circumſtance of ſuch importance, and ſuffer the preſent *reading* to paſs as genuine, without informing them of theſe juſt reaſons for rejecting it, and for believing that ſuch words as the *blood of God*, never fell from the apoſtle?

Of the ſame kind is what follows 1 John iii. 16. GOD *laid down his life for us*.

To deliver this text, as it is here put, without heſitation, as a proof of Chriſt's being the ſupreme God, is a token of very inexcuſeable negligence in our author. He ought to have known better. Dr. Doddridge (*g*), whoſe ſentiments concerning the divinity of Chriſt are well known, plainly ſaw that the word GOD had nothing to do here, and accordingly expunged it out of his New Teſtament. See Mill, Wetſtein, and Bengelius. Inſtead therefore of GOD *laid down his life for us*, it is to be read, HE (i. e. Chriſt) *laid down his life for us*.

One cannot but lament the injury and injuſtice done to the *engliſh* reader, by permitting theſe and other acknowleged ſpurious *readings* to remain in our Bibles as the real words of the ſacred writers. If they were marked out or removed, as they ought to be, chriſtians would entertain a juſt horror of language to which they have been too much familiariſed; viz. of GOD *dying*, *laying down his life*, *being crucified*, *ſhedding his blood*, and the like;

(*g*) See his paraphraſe upon the place.

as they would perceive the ſhocking idea to be ſo wholly without foundation in the ſacred writings.

Our author proceeds to cite Acts x. 36. *Jeſus Chriſt is* LORD OF ALL.

Mr. Robinſon would have it believed upon his bare aſſertion, that LORD OF ALL in this place ſignifies the ſovereign almighty Being, the ſupreme God, and that Jeſus Chriſt is HE. But the Scriptures inſtruct us better to interpret theſe ſayings, and give us another account of the origin, nature, and extent of the lordſhip and dignity of Jeſus Chriſt. According to them, Jeſus Chriſt is *Lord of all*, becauſe God hath ſo conſtituted him in the things relating to the goſpel, and for accompliſhing his purpoſe in bringing his creatures of mankind to virtue and an eternal felicity. And theſe Scriptures alſo aſſign a reaſon for this high honour conferred upon the Lord Jeſus; that it was for the ſake of his eminent virtue and tried obedience to God. Says the apoſtle, Philip. ii. 9, 10, 11. *becauſe he was obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs: Therefore* GOD *alſo hath highly exalted him, and hath graciouſly given him a name which is above every name: That in the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is* Lord, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER.

We are next preſented with Rom. ix. 5. *Chriſt is* OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER.

It has often been ſhewn, that this our preſent engliſh tranſlation is not a juſt rendering and repreſentation of the apoſtle's words and meaning. He does not ſay, *Chriſt is* OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER: but his words ſhould be tranſlated *Of whom* (i. e. of the Iſraelites) *Chriſt came:* GOD, *who*

who is over all, be bleſſed for ever! Or, as others conſtrue it; *Whoſe are the fathers; of whom, as concerning the fleſh, Chriſt came; whoſe is* THE GOD OVER ALL, *bleſſed for ever.* It is not needful to allege thoſe very probable arguments by which learned men have proved one or other of theſe to be the words and genuine ſenſe of the apoſtle. But it affords a farther preſumption that ſo it is, and that our engliſh verſion is wrong, becauſe Origen, that honeſt man and moſt diligent ſtudent in the Scriptures, in his time, charges thoſe perſons with being guilty of a precipitate raſhneſs, who ſtiled Chriſt, THE GOD OVER ALL. This ſhews, that he did not hold it to be St. Paul's doctrine, nor underſtood the clauſe in queſtion to relate to Chriſt, but to God (*h*). "Be it ſo, ſays "he, that in the vaſt number of chriſtians, and "amidſt the diverſity of opinions which is un- "avoidable among them, there ſhould be found "ſome ſo raſh as to ſuppoſe the Saviour to be "THE GOD OVER ALL: yet we are not of that "ſort, but pay more regard to his own account "of himſelf; *My Father, who hath ſent me, is* "*greater than I* (*i*)."

(*h*) Εγω δε τινας, ως εν πληθει πιστευοντων, και διχομοιων διαφωνιαν, δια την προπετειαν υποτιθεσθαι τον σωτηρα ειναι τον επι παντι θεον· αλλ' οτι γε ημεις τοιουτοι, οι πειθομενοι αυτω λεγοντι, ο πατηρ, ο πεμψας με, μειζων μου εστι.

Origen. contra Celſum. l. viii. p. 387. Ed. Spenc.

(*i*) "The known phraſe, ο επι παντων θεος, *God over all*, "both in the Scripture, and moſt primitive antiquity, di- "rectly and ſingly means, GOD, *the Father*. And it was "thought in thoſe ancient days, that to ſay the Son was "ο επι παντων θεος, was little leſs than ignorance, hereſy, "blaſphemy." Whiſton's Primitive Chriſtianity revived, Vol. IV. p. 14. where is much more on the ſubject deſerving peruſal.

The laſt of Mr. Robinſon's citations of Scripture directly declaring, as he imagines, Chriſt to be the ſupreme God, is, Romans xiv. 10. 12. *We ſhall all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of* CHRIST:———*ſo then every one of us ſhall give account of himſelf to* GOD. This is all moſt true: but we ſee no proof in it of Chriſt being God; for which our author produces it. For St. Paul explains to us, upon another occaſion, in what manner it is that *we ſhall ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, and give account of ourſelves to God* at the ſame time, yet without making Jeſus Chriſt, God, or any thing more than a human being, high in his favour. GOD *hath appointed a day*, ſaith he, *in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that* MAN *whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.* Acts xvii. 30, 31.

SECTION III.

Whether the ſame Titles are given to Chriſt in the Chriſtian Scriptures, which are given to God in the Jewiſh Scriptures.

OUR author's next head and poſition is, p. 12, that "the writers of the New Teſtament "deſcribe Jeſus Chriſt by the very names and "titles, by which the writers of the Old Teſta-"ment had deſcribed the Supreme God:" whence it is to be inferred, that Jeſus Chriſt is the Supreme God. And to confirm this, he produces the following arrangement of texts from the Old and New Teſtament.

The

The titles given to God in the Jewiſh Scriptures.	The titles given to Chriſt in the Chriſtian Scriptures.
Thou ſhalt ſay, I AM *hath ſent me.* Exod. iii. 14.	*Before Abraham was,* I (Jeſus) AM. John viii. 58.
I (Jehovah) *am* THE FIRST AND THE LAST. Iſai. xliv. 6.	*I* (Jeſus) *am* THE FIRST AND THE LAST. Rev. i. 11. 17.
Jehovah your God is LORD OF LORDS. Deut. x. 17.	*The Lamb is* LORD OF LORDS. Rev. xvii. 14.
THE HIGHEST *himſelf ſhall eſtabliſh Zion.* Pſ. lxxxvii. 5.	*John went before the face of* THE HIGHEST. Luke i. 76.
The Lord of hoſts is THE KING OF GLORY. Pſ. xxiv. 10.	*Jeſus Chriſt is* LORD OF GLORY. James ii. 1.
I will SAVE *them by* THE LORD THEIR GOD. Hoſ. i. 7.	*The* SAVIOUR *born is Chriſt* THE LORD. Luke ii. 11.
Belſhazzar lifted up himſelf againſt THE LORD OF HEAVEN. Dan. v. 23.	*The ſecond man is* THE LORD FROM HEAVEN. 1 Cor. xv. 47.
Jehovah is exalted as HEAD ABOVE ALL. 1 Chron. xxix. 11.	*Chriſt is* THE HEAD OF ALL *principality and power.* Col. ii. 10.

Here, in like faſhion as under the former head, Mr. Robinſon is unfortunate in all his inſtances, whereby he would maintain Chriſt to be the ſupreme God. For it will be found, that the TITLES which he aſſigns to Chriſt for this purpoſe, are either ſuch as are not ſo peculiar to God as to be incompatible with the condition of any creature highly favoured by him; or, if they are TITLES peculiar to God, they are by our author wrongly aſcribed to Jeſus Chriſt.

But what is wanting in argument, is made up by much too confident assertion; which will supply its place with many: for he scruples not to say here;

"If they who described Jesus Christ to the Jews "by these sacred names and titles, intended to "convey an idea of HIS DEITY, the description is "just, and the application safe: but if they in- "tended to describe a mere man, they were surely "of all men the most preposterous. They chose "a method of recommending Jesus to the Jews, "the most likely to enrage and alarm them. What- "ever they meant, the Jews understood them in "*our* sense, and took Jesus Christ for a BLAS- "PHEMER. *We stone thee*, said they, John x. 33, for "BLASPHEMY; *because thou, being a man*, MAKEST "THYSELF GOD."

In his application of this last passage from St. John's gospel, our author himself mistakes, and of course misrepresents the sentiments of the Jews concerning Christ. Gross as the apprehensions of that people were, they never entertained an idea, that there was any but *one Person*, who was Jehovah, the supreme God. It is an extravagance that none ever fell into but christians of the race of the heathens, to hold *more persons than one to be the supreme God*.

Our Saviour's answer here, and modest vindication of himself, shews, that all that his adversaries meant by their *aggravated* expression of his MAKING HIMSELF GOD, was his assuming the character of the Messiah, without what they thought the proper credentials for it: though as he tells them in his reply, *the works of the Father which he did*, i. e. his miraculous works, proved him to be the *Son of God*, i. e. the Messiah, the Christ: for the terms are equivalent; and *the Son of God*, *the Son of*

of the living God, the Son of the Bleſſed, are ſynonymous phraſes, by which the Jews at that time were wont to ſpeak of the great divine prophet and deliverer whom they expected. This is farther demonſtrated, if a thing ſo plain can need it, by this; that when our Lord was capitally convicted by the Jewiſh Sanhedrim, the charge brought againſt him was, *not* that he made himſelf Jehovah, the ſupreme God; but the Chriſt. *Again*, it is ſaid, *the high prieſt aſked him and ſaid to him; Art thou* THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE BLESSED? *And Jeſus ſaid; I am. Then the high prieſt rent his clothes, and ſaid; What need have we of any other teſtimony? Ye have heard the* BLASPHEMY: *What think ye? And they all condemned him as guilty of a capital crime.* Mark xiv. 61, &c. And after this, when the ſame perſons accuſed him before Pilate, they make no mention of *his deity* as our author ſpeaks, but of his pretended claim to be the Meſſiah, their king and prophet. *The Jews anſwered Pilate; We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, becauſe he hath made himſelf* THE SON OF GOD. John xix. 7. It may be hoped, that we ſhall hear no more of the Jews in our Lord's time imagining him to claim to be the moſt high God, or to be any thing more than his great prophet, the promiſed Meſſiah.

We turn ourſelves then to conſider the TITLES given to Chriſt in the New Teſtament, which being the ſame, according to our author, with thoſe attributed to GOD in the Old Teſtament, indicate Chriſt alſo to be in like manner GOD. Still however as before, all is to be taken upon his word; that his texts of ſcripture prove that for which he brings them: for he contents himſelf merely with quoting them.

He firſt brings, *Before Abraham was*, I AM. John viii. 58.

It is a miſtake into which many have fallen, as well as Mr. Robinſon, that our Lord here alludes to Exod. iii. 14. *Thou ſhalt ſay*, I AM *hath ſent me*; and that he thereby aſſerts himſelf to be GOD, Jehovah, the ſelf-exiſtent Being. But had this been Chriſt's deſign, the evangeliſt, who could not but have ſome knowlege of the Greek language in which he wrote, would not have couched it in ſuch ambiguous terms, as very imperfectly conveyed it, and ſo that in the ſame way of conſtruction it might be maintained, that the man blind from his birth, whom Chriſt healed, was alſo the ſupreme God. For this poor beggar's reply to thoſe who were making this inquiry about him, was; εγω ειμι, I AM. Joh. ix. 9. And farther, as the ſacred hiſtorians of the New Teſtament appear to have been acquainted with, and to have made uſe of, the Septuagint verſion of the Old, which had been made ſome few hundred years before, the apoſtle John, if he had ſuppoſed his divine Maſter had referred to Exod. iii. 14. would moſt probably have expreſſed himſelf in the words of that Greek tranſlation, εγω ειμι ο ων(k), *I am he who exiſts*; the ſelf-

(k) Mr. Robinſon however aſſerts the title of ο ων, the ſelf-exiſtent Being, to be given to Chriſt, in another part of his work; introducing it with very great pomp, a ſmall part of which only I lay before the reader.

P. 97. "The Jews, it is well known, having loſt the "uſe of their pure native Hebrew tongue, had a Greek "tranſlation of their Bible in high repute among them. "The New Teſtament writers all quoted ſcripture from this "tranſlation. All the Greek churches, to whom St. John "wrote, had no other copy. The tranſlators of the Greek "Bible had rendered the incommunicable name, ο ων. The "Lord ſaid to Moſes, εγω ειμι ο ων. The perſon appearing "to St. John quotes this paſſage, and ſays to John, εγω ειμι "—ο ων, και ο ην, και ο ερχομενος," i. e. *I am—he, which is, and which was, and which is to come.* But

self-existent God: which would have put the matter out of all doubt.

As it is not therefore likely, for these and other reasons, that Christ's answer in this place had any respect to this NAME, which God gave himself formerly to Moses, the words he here makes use of, *I am*, cannot be brought as a proof of Christ being GOD. What he really intended by them, he himself has furnished us with a key to unfold, in the very discourse that he is holding with these Jews. For verse 24. he says; *If ye believe not that* I AM he; *ye shall die in your sins:* and verse 28. *When ye shall have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that* I AM he. In both these instances, our english translators have held it necessary to add *he* to *I am*, *I am* he, i. e. I am the Christ, to make proper sense of it; plainly seeing that the holy Jesus intended only to declare that he was the Christ, the promised Messiah, whom they ex-

But it will be evident, that the person who says this, is not Jesus Christ, the person who appeared to John; but one totally and infinitely different, the Almighty Being himself. For the apostle's salutation to the churches of Asia, four verses before, thus opens; *Grace be unto you and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come;—and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first born from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.* Christ is here described as a man who suffered death for the truth, and in consequence of this, had the honour of being raised to an immortal life for his consummate virtue and loyalty to God, and exalted above all others of mankind. And he is hereby as expressly distinguished, as words can mark the distinction, from the eternal God, *who is, and who was, and who is to come,* ο ων, και ο ην, και ο ερχομενος, who cannot die. Therefore in the 8th verse, it can be none other than Jehovah, the self-existent God, who is introduced thus declaring his eternal being and perfections, pervading all time, past, present, and to come; *I am Alpha, and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord; which is, and which was, and which is to come; the Almighty.*

pected; which his countrymen would not admit him to be notwithſtanding the miraculous proofs he gave of it, on account of his low outward appearance and condemnation of their worldly ambitious views and purſuits.

Theſe tranſlators, to have been conſiſtent with themſelves, ſhould have rendered the ſame phraſe here in the ſame way; viz. *Before Abraham was*, I AM *he*; that is, the Chriſt. And this they would have done, had they not been prepoſſeſſed with the notion, that Chriſt was the ſupreme God, and glad to lay hold of any thing that favoured it. For they would otherwiſe have perceived, that our Lord intended the ſame thing here as in thoſe other paſſages. And although he was not to fill the office of the Meſſiah till many ages after the time of Abraham, he might ſay that he was the Meſſiah before that patriarch was born, *Before Abraham was, I am he*, by reaſon of his deſtination to that office by Almighty God, *known unto whom* (Acts xv. 18.) *are all his works from the beginning of the world*. See Gen. xxii. 18. And perhaps our Lord might have in his mind, that obſcure oracle concerning himſelf, delivered immediately after the tranſgreſſion and forfeiture of our firſt parents, (Gen. iii. 15.) of *the ſeed of the woman being to bruiſe the ſerpent's head*.

They muſt moreover be great ſtrangers to the ſtile of the ſacred writings, who have not obſerved, that it is cuſtomary with them to ſpeak of future things and perſons, intended by Almighty God to take place and to exiſt, as if they already had a being. So (Iſai. xlv. 1.) *Thus ſaith the* LORD *to his anointed, to* Cyrus, *whom I hold faſt by the right hand*: although that prince was then unborn. Thus alſo (Luke xx. 37.) *Moſes calleth the* LORD (Jehovah) *the God of Abraham, of Iſaac, and of Jacob*, when thoſe patriarchs were dead; becauſe on account

of God's purpoſe to raiſe them from the dead, they were in his ſight as alive: *for* (as our Lord himſelf expreſſes it, ver. 38.) *all* (they) *live unto him.* Our Lord likewiſe (John xvii. 5.) prays for *the glory which he had with the father before the world was*; i. e. the glory of being the chief inſtrument of bringing a dark and degenerate world to virtue and eternal life. For that, and not any thing he had before been poſſeſſed of, is the glory that he there ſpeaks of; and for which he prays. Which way of ſpeaking, the apoſtle Peter well explains, when he ſays concerning Chriſt, (1 Pet. i. 20.) *who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was made manifeſt in theſe latter times.* And ſo here, our Lord, though he had no being, till he was brought forth by his mother Mary, at Bethlehem in Judea, 1785 years ſince, according to the vulgar era; was nevertheleſs the Meſſiah, the Chriſt, before Abraham was born; becauſe God had foreordained, that there ſhould be one of human kind raiſed up to ſuſtain that character, at ſome future period.

His next inſtance of the ſame title being given to Chriſt, as to God himſelf; is,

I (Jehovah) *am* THE FIRST AND THE LAST.	*I* (Jeſus) *am* THE FIRST AND THE LAST.
Iſai. xliv. 6.	Rev. i. 11. 17.

It is a mark of very blameable neglect or ignorance in Mr. Robinſon to refer his readers to Revel. i. 11. as an example of the title of *the firſt and the laſt* being given to Chriſt; when it is a point well known to and allowed by (*k*) the learned, that the words, *I am alpha and omega, the firſt and*

(*k*) See Mill and Weiſtein. Grieſbach has, to his honour, left them out of the text in his late moſt valuable edition of the New Teſtament; where they ought to have no place.

the

the laſt, in the beginning of this eleventh verſe, are an interpolation, being wanting in all the beſt manuſcript copies and antient verſions of the New Teſtament; having probably been inſerted in later times by ſome miſtake of Tranſcribers.

And although in the 17th verſe of this chapter, Chriſt undoubtedly calls himſelf, *the firſt and the laſt*; yet this does not prove Jeſus to be Jehovah, the moſt high God? It is not ſufficient evidence of it, that Almighty God uſed the ſame terms in ſpeaking concerning himſelf, many ages before, by his prophet Iſaiah. Unleſs the reader be diſpoſed at all events, to take it on truſt from Mr. Robinſon, it may very naturally be preſumed, and he will eaſily perceive, that God may ſtile himſelf *the firſt and the laſt* in one ſenſe, and Jeſus be ſo termed in another ſenſe, ſo as not to give the leaſt colour to ſuſpect Jeſus to be the moſt high God on this account.

God, for inſtance, is moſt truly *the firſt and the laſt*, in that he is before all things, and all things are from him, depending upon him, and which will for ever depend upon him, for their exiſtence. They may periſh, but he endureth for ever and ever. Chriſt, on the other hand, was *the firſt and the laſt*, in the divine diſpenſation of the goſpel, as the whole was appointed to begin with and had thus its origin from him, and ſhall be carried on to its final completion, by his miniſtry, and according to his predictions, whatever oppoſition be made to it by the powers of this world. That theſe terms, *the firſt and the laſt*, are here to be applied to our Lord, in ſome ſuch qualified ſenſe as this, is moſt apparent from the words immediately following; viz. *I am he that liveth and was dead. And behold I am alive for evermore.* i. e. "Although I once "ſuffered by the hands of unrighteous men, and "was put to death; I ſhall now live for ever, and

"be

" be enabled to recompenſe all my ſincere follow-
" ers, who ſhall after my example ſuffer for the
" truth." Such things as *ſuffering*, *dying*, can never in any ſort be predicated of, or belong to the *ever bleſſed*, eternal God.

A third inſtance of the ſame title given to Chriſt as to God himſelf, whence our author would ſuppoſe and have it inferred, that Chriſt alſo is God; is

Jehovah your God is LORD OF LORDS. Deut. x. 17.

The Lamb is LORD OF LORDS. Rev. xvii. 14.

He might likewiſe have brought to the ſame purpoſe, as is ſometimes done;

God *is the bleſſed and only Potentate*, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. 1 Tim. vi. 15.

Jeſus, *the faithful and true, is* KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Rev. xix. 11. 16.

None can deny, for it is obvious to ſight, that the ſame titles are here given to Chriſt as to God himſelf. But then they are not titles ſo peculiar to God, as not to be aſcribed to his creatures alſo. For Nebuchadnezzar is by the prophet ſtiled *king of kings*, but Nebuchadnezzar was not therefore the moſt high God; nor was Chriſt, becauſe of his being called King of kings and Lord of lords. Mr. Robinſon ſhould have conſidered what is ſo frequently inculcated in the Scriptures, that our Saviour is only Lord and King as appointed by Almighty God, and therefore as Daniel ſaid to Nebuchadnezzar (ii. 37.) *Thou, o king, art* KING OF KINGS; *for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and ſtrength, and glory:* So Chriſt is KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS, becauſe the God and Father of him and of all, hath made and conſtituted him ſuch. Philip ii. 8, 9, 10, 11.

Another

Another example of the same supposed title ascribed to Christ as to God, from which it is to be concluded, that Christ is the most high God; is,

THE HIGHEST *himself shall establish Zion.* Ps. lxxxvii. 6.

John went before the face of THE HIGHEST. Luke i. 76.

Here is unquestionably a title peculiar to God; and Mr. Robinson, according to custom, expects we should take it upon his word, without any proof, that it belongs to Jesus Christ. But he imposes on himself and his readers, as in a former instance, (p. 14.) by not considering and distinguishing; that although John the Baptist was Christ's forerunner and harbinger, who went before him to prepare the Jews for his reception; the same John might also in very customary, intelligible language, be said at the same time to go before the most high God: because God was in Christ, in this sense, in that he manifested himself by him, and spoke to men by him, as his prophet and messenger. Mr. Robinson by the same kind of argument might infer that the twelve apostles were each of them God, as well as their Master Jesus, because he told them, (Matth. x. 40.) *He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.*

A farther instance of a similar title assigned to God and to Christ, from which it is infer'd, that Christ is the supreme God, is;

The Lord of hosts is THE KING OF GLORY. Ps. xxiv. 10.

Jesus Christ is LORD OF GLORY. James ii. 1.

Our author should here again have paid some attention, that *Lord of glory*, *king of glory*, or any the like title, though ascribed to God, yet does not in so absolute a manner belong to him, but that it may

may be aſcribed to his creatures, whom he qualifies for it. Chriſt is Lord of glory, and King of glory, without all doubt; yet he is not therefore LORD and KING OF GLORY as Jehovah, the ſupreme God; but ſuch a Lord and King as God made and appointed him.

Another inſtance to his point, as he ſuppoſes, is;

I will ſave them by THE LORD THEIR GOD. Hoſea i. 7.	*The Saviour born is Chriſt* THE LORD. Luke ii. 11.

If Mr. Robinſon would have his readers underſtand this paſſage in Hoſea, as if Almighty God, *the Lord of hoſts*, had ſaid he would ſave his people by another Almighty God beſides himſelf, (as ſome have ſuppoſed,) and by the latter would have it concluded Chriſt to be meant: it is ſufficient to ſay, that ſuch conſtruction is owing to a total ignorance of the idiom of the Hebrew language, ſo frequently recurring, in repeating the noun, inſtead of ſubſtituting the pronoun for it. So we read 1 Kings viii. 1. *Then Solomon aſſembled the elders of Iſrael, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children, unto king Solomon*:—not ſurely to another king Solomon, but to himſelf. In like manner Pſalm l. 23. The Almighty Being ſays; *Whoſo offereth praiſe, glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his converſation aright will I ſhew the ſalvation of God*: not again, the ſalvation of another God; but *my* ſalvation. So Gen. xix. 24. The LORD *rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimſtone and fire, from the* LORD *out of heaven*: i. e. from himſelf, not from any other LORD or Jehovah. And St. Paul expreſſes his devout wiſhes for his friend, (2 Tim. i. 18.) THE LORD *grant unto him that he may find mercy of* THE LORD *in that day*: i. e. may find mercy from HIM.

But

But if our author would have it ſuppoſed, that there is ſomething that denotes Chriſt to be the ſupreme God, by his being called *the Lord, the Saviour*; he ſhould have recollected, what we have ſo often mentioned, that in whatever way he is *Lord*, and the ſame might be ſhewn that in whatever way he is *the Saviour*, it is God who made him ſuch, and impowered him to fill thoſe characters reſpectively.

It next follows;

Belſhazzar lifted up himſelf againſt THE LORD OF HEAVEN. Dan. v. 23.

The ſecond man is THE LORD FROM HEAVEN. 1 Cor. xv. 47.

Suppoſing the true ſtate of the ſacred text to be given, in this quotation from St. Paul, which is not ſo, there is great inattention to its true meaning in contraſting it with the paſſage from Daniel, and propoſing them both together as furniſhing a proof of Chriſt being the ſupreme God, for having the like title aſcribed to him as to God; which is however by no means true here. For the apoſtle ſays, *The firſt man is of the earth, earthy*, or created out of the duſt: i. e. Adam was periſhable, like the materials out of which he was framed. But *the ſecond man*, to whom belongs the ſpiritual body he had mentioned juſt before, who is Chriſt *the Lord, is from heaven*, of a heavenly or divine fabric and conſtitution.

But waving this, the learned know, and Mr. Robinſon ſhould have known, that the term, *Lord*, in this paſſage, has crept in by the miſtake of Tranſcribers, and was not written by St. Paul; whoſe words are only, *the ſecond man is from heaven*; leaving out *Lord*. N. B. Luther omitted *Lord* in his German tranſlation of the Bible. Others alſo of the Reformers rejected it, as not being a part of Scripture.

The

The laſt inſtance alleged, of a ſimilar title given to God and to Chriſt, intended to ſhew the latter to be the ſupreme God; is;

Jehovah is exalted as HEAD ABOVE ALL. Chron. xxix. 11.

Chriſt is THE HEAD OF ALL *principality and power.* Col. iii. 10.

The producing together theſe parallel places, and marking them ſo as to point out their reſemblance to the eye, which is done throughout, and which I have copied, does more credit to our author's diligence in turning over the ſacred pages, than to his diſcernment in furniſhing the means of interpreting what is contained in them. What if Chriſt be, as he is undoubtedly ſaid to be, *the head of all principality and power?* Whatſoever ſenſe you put upon this deſcription of him, it does not therefore follow that he is Jehovah, God, exalted as head above all. The ſame apoſtle, who thus deſcribes Chriſt in this place, when he ſpeaks of him in another, (1 Cor. xi. 3.) as being *the head of every man*, declares at the ſame time, leſt there ſhould be any miſtake about the origin or extent of his power; *I would have you know, that* THE HEAD OF CHRIST IS GOD. So that however exalted he is, whatever principality or power Chriſt poſſeſſes, there is ONE who, in the apoſtle's account, is tranſcendently and infinitely above him, and who controuls and governs him, and all things, and perſons, whatſoever.

SECTION IV.

Whether the Perfections which are aſcribed to Jeſus Chriſt in the Scriptures, are the ſame with thoſe that are aſcribed to God?

MR. Robinſon's next head is, that "the writers "of Revelation aſcribe the ſame perfections "to Jeſus Chriſt, which they aſcribe to God."

And from certain texts of Scripture, collected and ranged together for the purpose, but without any proof offered, either that they are the incommunicable perfections of God which are therein described; or, if such, that they are really ascribed to Christ: he nevertheless scruples not to say, as was above noted, "that if Jesus Christ be not God, "the apostles are chargeable either with weakness "or wickedness."

To work upon the passions of his readers, for our author is no where unskilled in that art, he touches beforehand upon "the most alarming "consequences that would follow, were the im-"perfections of creatures to be ascribed to God, "or the perfections of God to creatures.—And "yet, adds he, notwithstanding so many reasons "for precision, Jesus Christ declares, *all things, "that the Father hath, are mine*; a very dan-"gerous position, if he were not God." How easy is it for a person of a fruitful imagination, and ready volubility of speech, to give an imposing turn to words, intirely different from their real meaning! For our Lord is far from intending here all things throughout the wide universe of being; (as our author would have it supposed,) when he says (John xvi. 15.) *All things that the Father hath are mine:* but only all the things of which he was speaking at the time, as every one's unbiassed reason would dictate to him; namely, what related to the divine assistance, which he had been promising, would be given to his apostles after his decease and restoration to life and ascension to heaven: *All these things*, saith he, *that the Father hath, are mine:* i. e. he has promised them to me, and they will be imparted to you. In his prayer to the heavenly Father, our Lord uses similar phrases; *mine are thine, and thine are mine,* not to bespeak

beſpeak himſelf equal to the ſupreme Father and Poſſeſſor of heaven and earth, whom he was humbly ſupplicating at the time for favour and aſſiſtance; but to denote, with all thankfulneſs, that every thing relating to the goſpel diſpenſation and ſalvation of mankind, had without reſerve been communicated to him.

With the ſame deſign, of prepoſſeſſing the reader by ſtrong aſſeveration without proof, our author goes on to ſay; "The writers of revelation aſcribe "to Jeſus Chriſt the ſame perfections which they "aſcribe to God. They affirm; *In Chriſt dwelleth* "ALL THE FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD bodily." Col. ii. 9.

But before this had been ſo peremptorily aſſerted, it ſhould have been conſidered, that whatever perfections are here implied, Chriſt, in our apoſtle's account, received them from God, and depends upon him for them. For a little before, in the ſame epiſtle, he had ſaid, Col. i. 19. *It* pleaſed the Father, *that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell.* And moreover, the ſame apoſtle prays, Eph. iii. 19. that the chriſtian brethren at Epheſus, *might be filled with all the fulneſs of God.* So that the gifts or perfections here intended, were in ſome degree common to Chriſt with thoſe his firſt followers.

The phraſe, *fulneſs of the godhead*, does not ſignify all the perfections belonging to the deity; nor is that ſenſe countenanced by any ſimilar language throughout the Bible. But all that is intended by it, is; that in Chriſt dwell all thoſe excellent gifts which were communicated to him from God, and were to be beſtowed upon his followers, in that firſt age of the goſpel (*l*).

(*l*) See an admirable note of Peirce's upon the place; whoſe interpretation is here followed.

Mr. Robinſon employs ſome pains in claſſing the ſeveral texts of Scripture, which in his eſtimation, declare Chriſt to have the perfections of God, and therefore to be truly and properly God: a labour he may well beſtow, for he takes no other; but according to cuſtom, preſumes the reader will implicitly rely upon his judgment, that they prove the point in queſtion. I tranſcribe him exactly.

PERFECTIONS aſcribed to God.	PERFECTIONS aſcribed to Chriſt.
ETERNITY.	
GOD *is an* EVERLASTING *king*. Jer. x. 10.	*The name of* THE CHILD *is the* EVERLASTING FATHER. Iſai. ix. 6.
JEHOVAH *ſhall reign for* EVER AND EVER. Exod. xv. 18.	*Unto the* SON *he ſaith*, THY THRONE, O GOD, *is for* EVER AND EVER. Heb. i. 8, &c.
OMNIPOTENCE.	
The name of the LORD OF HOSTS *is the* MIGHTY GOD. Jer. xxxii. 18.	*The name of* THE CHILD *is* THE MIGHTY GOD. Iſai. ix. 6.
I JEHOVAH *appeared by the name of* GOD ALMIGHTY. Exod. vi. 2, 3.	*I* THE LORD *am* THE ALMIGHTY. Rev. i. 8. 11, 12, 13. 18.
IMMUTABILITY.	
I Jehovah CHANGE NOT. Mal. iii. 6.	*The heavens and the earth ſhall be changed: but* THOU (the Son) ART THE SAME. Heb. i. 10. 12.
Thou MY GOD *art* THE SAME, *and thy years have no end.* Pſ. cii. 24. 27.	JESUS CHRIST THE SAME *yeſterday, to-day, and for ever.* Heb. xiii. 8.

OMNI-

OMNIPRESENCE.

Do not I JEHOVAH FILL HEAVEN AND EARTH? Jer. xxiii. 24.

IN ALL PLACES *where I Jehovah record* MY NAME, *there will I come unto thee and bleſs thee.* Exod. xx. 24.

Chriſt is he, WHO FILLETH ALL IN ALL. Eph. i. 20. 23.

WHERE *two or three are gathered together in* MY NAME, *there am I* (Jeſus) *in the midſt of them.* Matth. xviii. 20.

OMNISCIENCE.

Jehovah is a God of knowlege. 1 Sam. ii. 5.

We are ſure that thou (Jeſus) *knoweſt all things.* John xvi. 30. ii. 24, 25. xxi. 17.

I JEHOVAH SEARCH THE HEARTS, I TRY THE REINS. Jer. xvii. 10.

I THE SON OF GOD, AM HE, WHICH SEARCHETH THE REINS AND THE HEARTS. Rev. ii. 23.

We are now to examine this pompous exhibition of texts, in their order, to ſee how far they indicate Chriſt to be poſſeſſed of the divine perfections, and therefore to be the moſt high God.

Texts to prove the eternity of Jeſus Chriſt.

1. GOD *is an* EVERLASTING *king.* Jer. x. 10.

The name of THE CHILD *is the* EVERLASTING *father.* Iſai. ix. 6.

One may wonder, that in the year 1782, for that is the date of the edition of our author's book before us, there ſhould be found any one ſo inadvertent to the true rendering of this paſſage in Iſaiah, as ſtill to give it a ſenſe that reflects ſo much diſcredit on a prophet of God; as if he could aſſert that *a child*, or that any Perſon but one, *could be the everlaſting Father.* The old Greek interpreters, who lived before and ſoon after our Saviour's

time, and the Vulgate, render it πατηρ τ αιωνος τ μελλοντος, pater futuri ſeculi, *the father of the age or the world to come.* So it is (*m*) rendered by Mr. Lowth. His ſon, the preſent Biſhop of London, tranſlates it, *the father of the everlaſting age.* Grotius; Pater ſeculi, qui multos poſt ſe relicturus ſit poſteros, et in longum tempus; i. e. the father of the (chriſtian) age, as who ſhould leave a numerous and laſting poſterity of believers behind him. Munſter; Pater eternitatis, i. e. ſemper gignens novam ſobolem in eccleſia: i. e. the father of eternity, in this ſenſe, as having a new offſpring in the church continually born to him. In which ſenſe alſo Martin, in his French tranſlation renders it; le Pere d' éternité.

I hope, for the ſake of truth and decency, that we ſhall hear no more of a child, the child Jeſus being *the everlaſting Father*; and that ſuch obnoxious language will in time be removed out of our Bibles.

2. JEHOVAH *ſhall reign for* EVER AND EVER. Exod. xv. 18.

Unto the SON *he ſaith,* THY THRONE O GOD, *is for* EVER AND EVER. Heb. i. 8. &c.

If the words of the apoſtle to the Hebrews are to be thus tranſlated, Mr. Robinſon in juſtice to his readers ſhould have apprized them, that although Chriſt be ſtiled God, he is at the ſame

(*m*) "The Septuagint render the words, πατηρ μελλοντος "αιωνος, the father of the world to come; and the vulgar "Latin follows this tranſlation: which ſince the Hebrew "words admit of, I can't but have a particular regard for "it, becauſe I am perſuaded it is from the authority of this "text, that the ſtate of the goſpel, or the kingdom of the "Meſſiah is called in the New Teſtament by the title of "μελλων αιων, the world to come. See Matth. xii. 32. "Hebr. ii. 5. vi. 5."——Lowth, on Iſai. ix. 6.

time

time declared to have a God over him and above him, who made him what he is: for it follows immediately after, in the same address still continued to Christ;—*A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom: Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore* GOD, *even* THY GOD, *hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows*; i. e. hath conferred superior honour and felicity upon thee.

But the better reading and translation of the words, which they equally admit, is; *To the Son he saith,* GOD *is thy throne for ever and ever*; i. e. God is the establisher of thy throne; thy support. See Peirce upon the place. Whatever therefore is here said of Christ, is very consistent with his having a beginning of existence like all the other creatures of God; is far from implying, that he is the eternal God, as our author would make him.

Texts to prove the omnipotence of Jesus Christ.

1. *The name of the* LORD OF HOSTS, *is the* MIGHTY GOD. Jer. xxxii. 18.	*The name of* THE CHILD *is* THE MIGHTY GOD. Isai. ix. 6.

Bp. Lowth, no less than our author, appears to me wholly unjustifiable in translating this passage in Isaiah, *the mighty God*; and letting it pass, as if *the most high God* was intended by it; without giving any notice of the different versions and readings of the place, ancient and modern; which may assure any one, that the present reading in our Bibles is not to be depended upon. I shall barely transcribe some of them, as they lie before me in *Calmet*; who, by the way is very angry with the antient Interpreters for leaving the word, *God*, out of their translations. Aquila renders it: *His name shall be called, wonderful, counsellor, the*

ſtrong, the mighty, the father of the age. Symmachas: *His name ſhall be called moſt extraordinary, a counſellor, the ſtrong, the mighty, the father of the age.* Theodotion: *And he called his name, wonderful, a counſellor, the ſtrong, the mighty, the father of the age.* The Vulgate has it: *Wonderful, God, powerful,* the father of the age. The Roman edition of the Vatican has alſo: *His name ſhall be called the angel or meſſenger of the great counſel: for I will make peace and health to come upon his princes.* Le Clerc follows the antients, and tranſlates the word *Al* or *El, powerful,* and not *God.* Martin underſtood it ſo, in his French tranſlation, but added the word *God,* as he thought, to make out the ſenſe, "le (Dieu) fort et puiſſant." Vatable, the learned French profeſſor renders it, heros fortis, as Martin Luther is ſaid to have done in his German tranſlation of the Bible, viz. *the mighty hero,* or *prince.* I would hope again, as I expreſſed myſelf upon another ill interpreted part of this verſe of the prophet Iſaiah, that the common unlearned chriſtian will not much longer continue to be impoſed upon by high authority, as if *a* CHILD could be THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, the infinite eternal Being.

2. *I* JEHOVAH *appeared by the name of* GOD ALMIGHTY. Exod. vi. 23.

I THE LORD *am* THE ALMIGHTY Rev. i. 8. 11, 12, 13. 18.

It will readily be perceived, that there is not any pretence for our author to aſſert Chriſt to be the omnipotent God, by ſtating juſtly and at length the whole of the paſſage to which he appeals for it; which is as follows:

Ver. 8. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, ſaith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come,* the *Almighty.*

11. Say-

11. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt, &c.

12, 13. *And I turned to ſee the voice that ſpake with me. And being turned, I ſaw ſeven golden candleſticks; and in the midſt of the candleſticks, one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.*

18. *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*

The 8th verſe here contains evidently a deſcription of God, the one ſupreme almighty Governor of all things, who is ever the ſame, unchangeable, and able to accompliſh his purpoſes throughout all time. But the part of the eleventh verſe, [*I am Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt*] which Mr. Robinſon preſumes to be deſcriptive of Chriſt, and to indicate him to be the Almighty Being deſcribed ver. 8, are not the words of the ſacred writer, as was above noted. As for the 13th and 18th verſes, they ſpeak of Chriſt expreſsly as a human being, and point at his ſuffering death in the cauſe of God, and being on that account raiſed to life, never to die more, with a power alſo of conferring a bleſſed immortality on his true diſciples.

Texts to prove Chriſt to be the unchangeable God.

1. *I Jehovah* CHANGE NOT. Mal. iii. 6.

The heavens and the earth ſhall be changed: but THOU (the Son) ART THE SAME. Heb. i. 10. 12.

Although Mr. Robinſon here inſerts the words [the Son] in a parentheſis, to aſcertain that this addreſs is made to the Son, he is very unfortunate in it; for it is God, and not Chriſt, to whom the words

words are applied, as was thus many years ſince ſhewn by an able writer, and ſkilful interpreter of Scripture.

" Here we may obſerve (ſays Mr. Emlyn, vol. ii. p. 340, 341.) that the tenth verſe, *And thou, Lord*, &c. (though it is a new citation) is not prefaced with, *And to the Son he ſaith*, as ver. 8; or with an *Again*, as ver. 5, 6. and ſo ii. 13; but barely, *And thou, Lord*. Now the God laſt mentioned was Chriſt's God, who had anointed him; and the *author* thereupon addreſſing himſelf to this God, breaks out into the celebration of his *power*, and eſpecially his *unchangeable duration*; which he dwells upon, as what he principally cites the text for, in order, I conceive, to prove the ſtability of the Son's kingdom before ſpoken of. *Thy throne, O God, is* (or *God is thy throne*) *for ever and ever: God, thy God, has anointed thee: and thou, Lord*, i. e. thou who haſt promiſed him ſuch a throne; *art he who laidſt the foundation of the earth, and by thy hands madeſt the heavens, which* though of long and permanent duration, yet *will* at length *periſh*; *but thou remaineſt*; *thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall not fail*. So that it ſeems to be a declaration of GOD'S IMMUTABILITY made here, to aſcertain the durableneſs of Chriſt's kingdom before-mentioned: and the rather ſo, becauſe this paſſage had been uſed originally for the ſame purpoſe in the CIId Pſalm, *viz.* to infer thence this concluſion in the laſt verſe; *the children of thy ſervants ſhall continue, and their ſeed ſhall be eſtabliſhed before thee*. In like manner it here proves, the *Son's* throne ſhould be eſtabliſhed for ever and ever by the ſame argument, *viz.* by God's immutability; and ſo was very pertinently alleged of God, without being applied to the *Son*; to ſhew how able *his God*, who

who had anointed him, was to make good and maintain what he had granted him, viz. a durable kingdom for ever." He then goes on to ſhew, that theſe words were ſo underſtood by the early chriſtian writers, Irenæus and Tertullian; and that no one antient writer ever applied them to Chriſt during the three firſt centuries; and that Dr. Waterland does not pretend that they were ever ſo applied till the fourth or fifth."

2. *Thou*, MY GOD, *art* THE SAME, *and thy years have no end.* Pſal. cii. 24. 27.

JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME *yeſterday, to-day, and for ever.* Heb. xiii. 8.

This text Heb. xiii. 8. from which Mr. Robinſon would have us conclude, that Chriſt is the unchangeable God, ſpoken of by the Pſalmiſt, is much beſide his purpoſe; as it relates not to Chriſt himſelf, but to his doctrine, which is often ſo called. Thus Eph. iv. 20. *ye have not ſo learned* Chriſt, i. e. the chriſtian doctrine. Phil. iv. 13. *I can do all things through* Chriſt *who ſtrengtheneth me*; i. e. through the teachings of Chriſt. Eph. iii. 17. *that* Chriſt *may dwell in your hearts by faith*; i. e. the doctrine of Chriſt. And taking in the preceding verſe, and the connection of the diſcourſe, it will be evident, that the Apoſtle is here ſpeaking of the doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, not of his perſon. *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have ſpoken unto you the word of God: whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of their converſation: Jeſus Chriſt, the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever. Be not carried about with diverſe and ſtrange doctrines.* "For there would "be no force in the argument, to ſay; *Imitate* "*your paſtors, becauſe the Perſon of Chriſt is al-* "*ways the ſame.* But the other way, it is a clear "and

" and very good argument. *Adhere to the faith* " *of the apoſtles who firſt inſtructed you, and be not* " *carried about with a variety of new doctrines:* " *For the doctrine of Chriſt is always one and the* " *ſame, and cannot be changed by men.*" Dr. Clarke's Reply to the Objections of Mr. Nelſon, p. 169.

Texts to prove Chriſt to be the omnipreſent God.

1. *Do not I* JEHOVAH FILL HEAVEN AND EARTH? Jer. xxiii. 24.

Chriſt is he WHO FILLETH ALL IN ALL. Eph. i. 20. 23.

A common reader, who ſubmits to our author's judgment, will imagine from theſe two paſſages compared together, that he has made out his point, and that Chriſt is God, preſent every where. But he greatly deceived himſelf, and miſleads others, by putting together paſſages that appear to the eye to agree, without conſidering their real meaning and difference. For that which is here ſpoken of Chriſt *filling all in all*, or " filling all things with all things," has not the leaſt reference to his being God, or being omnipreſent as God. For going back to verſe 17. we find, that it is, *the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory*, from whom he received this power, whatever it be. Ver. 22, 23. *He*, i. e. Chriſt's God, *hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulneſs of him that filleth all in all.*

The *fulneſs* then here ſpoken of evidently relates to the church, which is ſtiled the fulneſs of Chriſt, conſidered as the head of a body, which conſiſts of divers members, all together conſtituting a perfect body. Chriſtians therefore in general, compoſed of Jews and Gentiles, were the fulneſs of

of Chriſt, by which he was compleated; and he filled all things with all things, by imparting to the members of his church all thoſe ſpiritual and divine bleſſings of which they partook, and which were derived from him as their head, and which he received from God: *for* (as our apoſtle ſpeaks in a parallel paſſage, Coloſſ. ii. 19.) *it pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell:* or, as the original Greek is better tranſlated by Caſtellio and Peirce, *it pleaſed the Father to inhabit all fulneſs by Chriſt:* i. e. God appointed him to be the head of the church, that he might in or by him, inhabit, dwell among them, by communicating his extraordinary gifts and bleſſings to them; as our apoſtle elſewhere expreſſes it (Eph. ii. 22.) *in* or *by whom*, (i. e. Chriſt,) *you alſo are builded together for* an habitation of God, *through the Spirit.*

2. IN ALL PLACES *where I Jehovah record* MY NAME, *there will I come unto thee and bleſs thee.* Exod xx. 24.

Where two or three are gathered together in MY NAME, *there am I (Jeſus) in the midſt of them.* Matth. xviii. 20.

If Mr. Robinſon had paid due attention to our Lord's words in this place, he would have ſeen, that they are very far from implying him, either to be God, or to be preſent every where. For Chriſt is not ſpeaking of chriſtians in general, at all times, when joining together in the worſhip of God, as his diſciples; but only of a particular rare caſe of his apoſtles, in that firſt age of his religion, when miraculous powers were afforded, and their prayers and requeſts for particular things immediately anſwered. This is evident from the preceding verſe, where Chriſt addreſſes himſelf immediately to his apoſtles, and confines what he ſays to them

them only. Ver. 19. *I ſay unto* YOU, *that if two of* YOU *ſhall agree on earth as touching any thing that they ſhall aſk, it ſhall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.* Here it is to be obſerved, that it is to God, the Father, that Chriſt directs them to offer up their prayer, and not to himſelf. And to ſtrengthen their confidence of their requeſts being granted on ſuch eſpecial extraordinary occaſions, he ſubjoins; *for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them,* or *among them.* Not that he was to be perſonally preſent with them, when they were thus aſſembled for prayer to God: but he ſhould be *with them,* by that extraordinary divine power which would be vouchſafed to them, when thus aſſembled in his name. In other places we find him expreſſing himſelf in the ſame manner, as if he himſelf was to be in perſon with his diſciples, when all he intended by it was, that he ſhould ſo far be with them by the extraordinary divine aſſiſtance that would be granted them, that it would intirely ſupply his place, and be the ſame to them for their direction and aſſiſtance, as if he were actually preſent. Thus John xiv. 3. 18. *And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myſelf.—I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you* (*o*). In theſe paſſages, Chriſt ſpeaks of the gifts of the holy Spirit, which after his reſurrection he promiſes to his diſciples, and which would as effectually ſupply his place, and help them, as if he himſelf were to be again actually preſent with them.

(*o*) See Commentaries and Eſſays of the Society for promoting Scriptural knowlege, No. 1.

Texts

Texts to prove the omniſcience of Jeſus Chriſt.

1. *Jehovah is a God of knowlege.* 1 Sam. ii. 5.

We are ſure that thou (Jeſus) *knoweſt all things.* John xiv. 30. *But Jeſus did not commit himſelf unto them, becauſe he knew all men; and needed not that any ſhould teſtify of man: for he knew what was in man.* ii. 24, 25. *Peter was grieved, becauſe he ſaid unto him the third time, loveſt thou me? And he ſaid unto him, Lord, thou knoweſt all things; thou knoweſt that I love thee.* xxi. 17.

There can be little doubt but that all, who judge from what appears to the eye, and not from what is really intended by the words they read in a book, will be impoſed upon, as our author is, by this heap of texts; that Chriſt is all knowing as God. But with thoſe who will make the leaſt uſe of their own underſtandings, the veil will ſoon be withdrawn, and they will ſee that infinite wiſdom and knowlege belongeth only to God, and a limited degree of it, more or leſs, according to his good pleaſure, belongeth to Chriſt, or any the moſt exalted of his creatures.

In the firſt inſtance, if Mr. Robinſon had only taken the trouble to look to the end of the verſe he quotes; or had produced the whole of it before his readers; both he and they muſt have been ſenſible of his great miſtake, in alleging it for ſuch a purpoſe. Our Lord ſeems to have removed ſome perplexity which his apoſtles were under, concerning ſomething

ſomething not mentioned to us, before they had even propoſed their doubts to him, and when they were perſuaded he could not by any merely human power have known the ſtate of their minds at the time; they ſay to him, (John xvi. 30.) *Now we are ſure, that thou knoweſt all things, and needeſt not that any man ſhould aſk thee: by this we believe that thou cameſt forth from God.* It is evident, that by their divine Maſter *knowing all things*, his diſciples did not mean his poſſeſſing all poſſible knowlege, ſuch as belongs to the all-comprehenſive mind of God; but merely the ſecret knowlege he had juſt been ſhewing, of what related to themſelves, of their doubts and difficulties; and ſuch as belonged to him as a divine meſſenger and prophet of God. This is confirmed by their farther adding, what our author omitted; *by this we know that thou cameſt forth from God*—not, by this we know that thou art God, or that thou art all-knowing as God, (ſuch a thought never entered into their hearts, or could be ſuggeſted by the occaſion)—but *that thou cameſt forth from God*, that thou haſt ſuch extraordinary knowlege and communications from God, as fully convince us, that thou art the Chriſt.

That, *coming from God*, and *coming forth from* God, was well underſtood by the Jews, as ſignifying nothing more than being a prophet of God, is demonſtrated by that declaration of Nicodemus to Jeſus, recorded by this evangeliſt. (John iii. 2.) *The ſame came to Jeſus by night, and ſaid unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher* come from God: *for no man can do theſe miracles that thou doſt, except God be with him.* Obſerve, that this learned Jewiſh ruler believed Jeſus to *come from God*, to be a prophet, though he was not yet convinced, that he was their great promiſed prophet, the Chriſt, the Meſſiah. Our

Our author's next inſtance will appear ſtill to have as little foundation as the former. Therein the evangeliſt remarks, that at the beginning of Chriſt's public miniſtry and diſplay of his miraculous power, great numbers reſorting to him, and with different views profeſſing a reſpect for him, he was nevertheleſs much upon his guard; knowing many of theſe to be falſe hypocritical characters, and having a full diſcernment of their ſecret thoughts and bad deſigns. *But Jeſus did not commit himſelf unto them, becauſe he* knew all men; *and needed not that any ſhould teſtify of man: for he knew what was in man.* This language does not imply his being all-knowing as God; but that he had a knowlege of the hearts and characters of men, ſuch as was proper and neceſſary for the due diſcharge of his great office of a divine teacher, and Saviour of the world: i. e. *it was given* to him thus to know what was in man; agreeably with what the ſacred writer ſoon after mentions; (iii. 34.) that *God* gave *not the ſpirit by meaſure unto him.*

The third text produced by our author in proof of Chriſt's omniſcience, is but another inſtance of the ſame nature as the foregoing. For in this, his ſorrowful apoſtle Peter appeals to his knowlege of what paſſed in the hearts of men, for a proof of his own ſincerity and affection for him; *Lord, thou knoweſt* all *things: thou knoweſt that I love thee.* Theſe general expreſſions in all writings and diſcourſes are limited by the particular ſubject and occaſion. Thus Chriſt ſays to his diſciples, Mark xiii. 23. *Behold, I have foretold you* ALL *things*; i. e. all things that were neceſſary to prevent their being miſled by thoſe falſe Chriſts and deceivers, that he had been mentioning immediately before. He ſays of himſelf, Matth. xxviii. 18. ALL *power is*

given to me in heaven and in earth: but by what immediately follows in the next verſes, it appears, that he intended only that ſuch an extraordinary divine power was beſtowed on him by Almighty God, as would be ſufficient to propagate the goſpel with effect, and give it an eſtabliſhment among different nations. And the apoſtle John ſays to ſome ſincere chriſtians in thoſe days, who had extraordinary divine gifts imparted to them; (1 John ii. 20.) *Ye have an unction from the holy one, and ye know* ALL *things.* They did not know all things that were to be known; they were not all-knowing as God, which is the interpretation our author heedleſsly gives of ſuch language; but they had all that knowlege of the true goſpel of Chriſt, communicated to them, which was ſufficient to ſecure them from the error of thoſe antichriſts, he had juſt before mentioned; who, in thoſe very early days, began to be aſhamed of Chriſt being a real man, who ſuffered and died, and wanted to make him ſomething (*p*) different from a human being.

The whole then of the three inſtances produced by our author under this head, *of Chriſt being omniſcient, and therefore God*; amount only to this: that he had an extraordinary divine knowlege communicated to him, ſuch as was ſufficient for the proof of his miſſion from God, and to enable him to (*q*) finiſh his important work, which was committed to him.

(*p*) That moſt induſtrious and uſeful commentator, Dr. Benſon, upon 1 John ii. 19. ſays; "The perſons, whom St. John had his eye more particularly upon, denied that Jeſus, *who came in the fleſh*, was the Chriſt. (See ver. 22. iv. 2. 2 John 7.) I take them to have been of the number of the Docetæ, who held *that Chriſt only* ſeemed *to have fleſh, and to ſuffer.*"

(*q*) *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do.* John xvii. 4.

2.

2. *I*, JEHOVAH, SEARCH THE HEART, I TRY THE REINS. Jer. xvii. 10.

O JEHOVAH; THOU, *even* THOU ONLY, *knoweſt the hearts of all the children of men.* 1 Kings viii. 39.

I, THE SON OF GOD, AM HE, WHICH SEARCHETH THE REINS AND HEARTS. Rev. ii. 23.

In bringing theſe words of Rev. ii. 23. to prove Jeſus Chriſt to be Jehovah, the omniſcient God, Mr. Robinſon forgets, that in the beginning of the book, it is declared to be, *The Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt*, WHICH GOD GAVE UNTO HIM, *to ſhew unto his ſervants things which muſt ſhortly come to paſs*. This therefore limits his knowlege to the particular things and ſubjects ſpecified in the book; and forbids us to conſider Chriſt in the leaſt degree, or in the moſt diſtant manner, as being *the Searcher of hearts*, ſo as to be all-knowing as God himſelf, from whom he received the revelation of theſe things, of which he was before ignorant. When therefore our Lord here ſays, *I am he, which ſearcheth the reins and hearts:* he is neceſſarily and of courſe to be underſtood, as ſpeaking of that vaſt knowlege which he had received from God, in being made acquainted with the inward hearts and moſt concealed principles of action of ſome falſe and wicked teachers in thoſe early times of the goſpel, whom he characterizes under the name of *Jezebel*, who defiled Iſrael with her lewd and idolatrous practices.

Mr. Robinſon thus concludes this diviſion of his book. " Whatever other excellencies we can " conceive in the divine nature, are aſcribed to " God and to Chriſt, in the two following paſ- " ſages. The laſt is evidently a quotation from " the firſt."

Whether any of the *excellencies in the divine nature* are aſcribed to Chriſt; and whether what is ſpoken of Chriſt in this place, is copied from that fine hymn of David to the Almighty Being, uttered a little before that prince's death, will be ſeen by placing them in our author's manner, over-againſt each other.

Bleſſed be thou, O Jehovah, God of Iſrael our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Jehovah, is the greatneſs, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majeſty: for all that is in the heaven, and in the earth, is thine. Thine is the kingdom, O Jehovah; and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reigneſt over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give ſtrength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praiſe thy glorious name. 1 Chron. xxix. 10—13.

Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive power and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing. Bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever. Rev. v. 12, 13.

Does now the *aſcribing bleſſing, and honour, and power to the Lamb*, to the innocent Jeſus, in any degree reſemble that ſublime language; *Thine, O Jehovah, is the greatneſs, and the power, and the glory: for all that is in the heaven, and in the earth*

earth is thine: thine is the kingdom, and thou art exalted above all?

Is not *the Lamb that was ſlain*, he who died ſo nobly in the cauſe of the divine truth upon the croſs, as diſtinct as poſſible, and at an infinite diſtance, from him *that ſitteth upon the throne*; from *God that cannot die*; who a little before is deſcribed, as *he that liveth for ever and ever?* And what if this holy and exalted ſufferer be claſſed together with Jehovah, the moſt high God, in having bleſſing, and honour, and glory given to him at the ſame time? This does not take him out of his creature-like ſtate, or equallize him to God, any more than king David being in like manner ranked and worſhiped together with Jehovah, tranſformed that king into the moſt high God. And how could this author take upon him to ſay, of this worſhiping of the Lamb, Jeſus, together with him that ſat upon the throne, that it is called *worſhiping him that liveth for ever and ever*, on account of it being immediately added, ver. 14, *And the four and twenty elders fell down, and worſhiped him that liveth for ever and ever?* If he had uſed the leaſt reflection, he muſt have perceived, that this language, and the pronoun *him* denoting neceſſarily one ſingle perſon, could refer only to *him that ſat upon the throne*, as the only perſon living for ever and ever.

The real ſtate of the caſe however is, of which this writer ought to have taken notice; that the words, *him that liveth for ever and ever*, are not in the original as it came from the ſacred penman; but have been added in later times, from ch. iv. 10. either by miſtake, or by the officious ill-judged zeal of ſome tranſcriber. Upon this matter, Mill, Weſtein, and Bengelius, will ſatisfy the reader who can conſult them. The reflection

which the latter makes upon theſe words that have been foiſted in, is; "that it is even an act of piety "to cut out ſuch patch-work, without any ſcru-"ple:" "Talia additamenta, depoſito timore, "reſecare pium eſt."

SECTION V.

Whether the Works which are aſcribed to Jeſus Chriſt, are the ſame with thoſe that are aſcribed to JEHOVAH, *the Supreme God?*

IN his next diviſion, Mr. Robinſon maintains Jeſus Chriſt to be the ſupreme God, on account of the ſame WORKS being aſcribed to him as to God; and after terrifying his reader, according to cuſtom, with the *dangerous* conſequences, and *the injuſtice done to God*, by a ſlip here; concludes with ſaying, that "nothing can account for the "conduct of the writers of the new Teſtament in "what they advance in this reſpect, except in "their ſyſtem Jeſus and Jehovah be the ſame."

But here again, he only produces certain portions of Scripture, which muſt be taken upon his bare word, to be ſuch as really aſcribe to Chriſt, the works that are peculiar and appropriated to God: for he gives himſelf no trouble to aſcertain their true meaning, or to ſhew that they are at all applicable to his purpoſe. And having ſo haſtily and ſuperficially formed his own judgment, his whole manner and language is calculated to prevent and lay aſleep all farther inquiry in others. He begins;

"IS CREATION a work of God? *By Jeſus Chriſt* "*were all things* CREATED, *that are in heaven,* "*or that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, whe-*"*ther they be thrones, or dominions, or principali-*"*ties,*

" *ties, or powers; all things were created by him,* " *and for him.* Coloſ. i. 16."

That the apoſtle does not mean here to aſcribe the creation of the viſible world and all things in it to Jeſus Chriſt, is plain from theſe following reaſons.

1. All the other apoſtles are repreſented as joining, ſoon after Chriſt's reſurrection and aſcenſion into heaven, in the following ſolemn prayer to God; (Acts iv. 24.) (*r*) O LORD, *thou art the God, who haſt made heaven, and earth, and the ſea, and all that in them is.* The language here is exact and deciſive: THOU ART *the God who* HAST *made*, beſpeaks one ſingle perſon only to be God and maker of the world, Jehovah, the LORD, and no other: there is no way of evading it. In this very prayer alſo, ſoon after the above, Jeſus Chriſt is expreſsly and by name excluded from being God, the Creator of all things; ver. 27. *For of a truth, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Iſrael, were gathered together againſt thy holy* ſervant (*s*) *Jeſus, whom thou haſt anointed:* and again, ver. 30. *grant, that ſigns and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy* ſervant *Jeſus.*

(*r*) The expreſſions in the original are exceeding ſtrong and emphatical, and declare the abſolute ſupremacy, as well as the unity of God, as being one ſingle perſon, in a moſt remarkable manner; Δισποτα, συ ο Θεος, ο ποιησας, κ. τ. λ. *O thou ſovereign Maſter* of all; *thou art the God, who haſt made*, &c.

(*s*) N. B. Jeſus is here by the apoſtles in their prayer ſtiled the *ſervant* of the LORD God, who made heaven and earth. That the original Greek is rightly tranſlated *ſervant*, rather than *ſon* or child, cannot be doubted by thoſe who are capable of conſulting it. Bengelius honeſtly ſo renders it. See him on the place, and alſo on the chapter before, on Acts iii. 13. 26.

2. St. Paul himſelf alſo, who in the paſſage before us, Col. i. 16, is inconſiderately preſumed to aſſert Jeſus Chriſt to be the creator of the univerſe, does elſewhere aſſert the direct contrary doctrine; and marks out and diſtinguiſhes Chriſt from God, the Maker of the world, in ſuch a way as ſhews that he had not the leaſt idea of any thing of the kind belonging to Chriſt. For ſpeaking before a moſt learned and cultivated audience at Athens, many of them philoſophers by profeſſion, he aſſerted in the moſt expreſs manner; that the Being that made the univerſe, the firſt cauſe of all things, was one ſingle Perſon, and that Jeſus Chriſt was as different a perſon as poſſible; as different as the creature from its creator, the ſon from his father, the ſervant from his maſter. GOD *that made the world*, (ο ποιησας, manifeſtly defining him to be one perſon) HE (i. e. that ſingle perſon, for it is impoſſible the pronoun *he* ſhould refer to more than one perſon,) *hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.* Acts xvii. 24. 31.

Here then, we have firſt, all the other apoſtles; and after them, St. Paul, declaring GOD to be one ſingle perſon, and as ſuch, the Creator of all things; and this alſo declared, at the ſame time, in expreſs contradiſtinction to, and in direct excluſion of Jeſus Chriſt. And the Scriptures cannot contradict themſelves; neither can it be ſuppoſed that the apoſtles of Jeſus Chriſt ſhould be ignorant who he was, or who was the creator of the world. St. Paul therefore certainly did not intend the creation of the univerſe, when he here ſpeaks of *all things being created* by Jeſus Chriſt. What he intended will not be difficult to diſcover, if we will

will take any pains in our reſearches. For the term, *creation*, is by no means confined to the firſt production of things by an almighty power. It is uſed in other ſenſes by all writers, profane and ſacred; and by our apoſtle in particular. Thus, ſpeaking of our advantages by the goſpel, Eph. ii. 10. he ſays; *We are his* (God's) *workmanſhip*, created *in* (or *by*) *Jeſus Chriſt unto good works*: i. e. formed by the goſpel of Chriſt to the love and practice of all virtue. In another place (2 Cor. v. 17.) *If any man be in Chriſt, he is a* NEW CREATURE: i. e. a true chriſtian is a man made over again: has new tempers and diſpoſitions wrought in him, a new nature; changed from vice to virtue, from the world to God.

This *moral* and *ſpiritual creation*, the reformation of the whole world by the precepts and motives of the goſpel, will be found to be the thing here deſigned by the apoſtle, in Col. i. 16. For ver. 14. having ſpoken of that *redemption*, or deliverance from ſin and death, which we have by the *blood* of Chriſt, i. e. by that goſpel, which he courageouſly ſealed with his blood, by dying in atteſtation of it: and going on further to extoll him, as *the image of the inviſible God*; i. e. not God himſelf: (the image of a thing cannot be the thing itſelf of which it is an image,) but reſembling him in holineſs and goodneſs, and by a divine wiſdom and authority communicated to him: as being alſo the *firſt-born*, or the chief, the lord, not (*t*) *of every creature*, as we wrongly tranſlate the words; but *of all men*, of all God's creatures

(*t*) So Mark xvi. 15. *And he ſaid unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature*, (πασῃ τῃ κτισει, as it is here πασης κτισεως) i. e. to all men, to *every* human *creature*.

of

of mankind; i. e. not of Jews only, who were formerly peculiarly favoured of God, but of Jews and Gentiles now combined into one, and brought into a new relation to God and to each other.

Having thus characterized Chriſt as the head and lord of this new people, the apoſtle proceeds to ſhew how he was ſo; ver. 16. *For by him were all things* created, *that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him.*

Very able and impartial interpreters of the New Teſtament, of very different ſentiments concerning the perſon of Chriſt, have ſeen here, that St. Paul uſes this lofty pompous language, not as if the inhabitants of the heavenly world, and of the whole univerſe, were affected by the goſpel, and underwent a very conſiderable change from it: but that it is merely language which he (*u*) borrows from the popular notions of his countrymen about the different orders of beings in the unſeen world, their names and powers, thereby to ſet off and magnify the goſpel the more.

It is alſo cuſtomary in the prophetic writings, to ſpeak of great events in terms of alluſion to their ancient hiſtory, eſpecially the account of the creation by Moſes.

And from all theſe circumſtances laid together, the attentive reader will perceive, that what the apoſtle intended by this grand imagery, was, that mankind, of whom alone he had been treating, all the individuals, and the different ſtates and powers upon earth, would undergo a mighty revolution, would be renovated and reformed, put into

(*u*) See Wetſtein in locum, Zanchius alſo, upon Eph. i. 20.

a new

a new ſtate and condition, which might well be ſtiled nothing leſs than a *new creation*, by being brought acquainted with Jeſus Chriſt, and becoming ſubjects and obedient to the laws of his kingdom.

This account appears to be confirmed, by the long liſt which is given of the dignities of Chriſt; concluding, verſe the 18th, with his being *the beginning, the firſt-born from the dead*; that is, by ranking it among his higheſt honours, that for his conſummate virtue, benevolence to men, and loyalty to God, in ſuffering for the truth, he was ſpeedily raiſed from the dead to an immortal life and glory. For this, however glorious and honourable for a creature, muſt be conſidered as a very inferior circumſtance, and ſuch as could not be added by the apoſtle, to crown a character which had before been denominated by him, the omnipotent and eternal author of the univerſe.

I am ſenſible that many perſons will have great prejudices againſt this interpretation, who have been always accuſtomed to annex the production of things out of nothing by a divine power, to the word *creation*; and have been led from that to conſider Jeſus Chriſt as here pronounced to be the creator of all things.

It will be difficult alſo for ſome to reconcile themſelves to St. Paul's literal repreſentation of the whole univerſe of Beings as created by Chriſt, when all he intended by ſuch magnificent language, was only to give a more grand and ſublime idea of the goſpel itſelf.

But a proper acquaintance with and underſtanding of the prophets of the Old Teſtament, and their writings, who frequently make uſe of images and alluſions equally daring and bold, and with which the ſacred writers were continually converſant,

ſant, would ſatisfy them, that there was nothing improper or uncommon in St. Paul's adopting ſuch a way of ſpeaking. To give only one inſtance. Says the Almighty Being by his prophet Iſaiah; (lxv. 17, 18.) *Behold I* create new heavens, and a new earth; *and the former ones ſhall not be remembered, neither ſhall they be brought to mind any more. But ye ſhall rejoice and exult in the age to come, which I create.* What now is intended by theſe lofty terms, of the *creation of new heavens and a new earth*, &c? Not ſurely that the preſent univerſe of things is to be done away, and a new one created in its ſtead: but only to prefigure and repreſent that new ſtate, and happy change of things upon earth for the better, in the increaſing virtue and happineſs of mankind, which in future times would be effected by the goſpel.

The prophets of the Old and New Teſtament were left to themſelves by divine Providence, to expreſs things in their own way, and according to their natural feelings, temper and education. Hence the apoſtle James, a plain man, without any learning, delivers himſelf ſuitably in plain and eaſy language. But Paul of Tarſus, bred up at the feet of Gamaliel, a man of genius and warm imagination, and full of jewiſh and heathen literature, which mixes itſelf continually with his ideas and expreſſions, is on that account obſcure oftentimes, and requires more pains to underſtand him. If chriſtians will not make a due diſcrimination, and uſe their faculties in the underſtanding of the ſacred as they would of any other writers, they muſt continue in error, and bear the blame, whatever it be, that belongs to it. But to thoſe who are deſirous, and would take pains to come at the truth, but cannot ſee the whole force of the explanation here given, though I ſhould

ſhould think it could not be hard to be comprehended; they will do well to abide by what they do know and comprehend: and in the preſent caſe, which has given riſe to theſe reflections, to be mindful to give its due weight to what is produced above from all the apoſtles, and never at any time contradicted by them; *viz.* That GOD *is* one ſingle perſon, and HE only the creator of all things. And therefore, if at any time, the *creation* of all things ſeems to them to be aſcribed to Jeſus Chriſt, they may reſt aſſured, and would find upon due examination, if they were competent to make it, that it is wrongly aſcribed to him, and belongs to God: Or, if it belong to Chriſt, it is not to be underſtood of the firſt formation of the univerſe; but in a different ſenſe, of the new moral and ſpiritual creation, the reformation of mankind by the goſpel.

Mr. Robinſon's next inſtance of Chriſt doing what is peculiarly the work of God, and being therefore God himſelf; is put by him in the ſame brief authoritative ſtile, to ſtrike the common reader; preſuming without proof, that the Scriptures are to be taken exactly in the ſenſe that he gives them.

" Is PRESERVATION a work of God? *Jeſus Chriſt* UPHOLDS *all things by the word of his power.* Hebr. i. 3. *By him all things* CONSIST. Coloſſ. i. 17."

With reſpect to this firſt citation from the beginning of the epiſtle to the Hebrews, a very able and pious critic, whoſe words I have put in the margin (*w*), ſhews; that it is not to be underſtood of

(*w*) " The common way of expounding the expreſſion, is, that the Son upholds all things by the word of his own power. And accordingly, our printed copies have here αὐτῦ and

of Chriſt *upholding all things by his own* power, but by the power of God. So that whatever be the meaning of it, *preſervation*, or any thing elſe, it cannot be a proof of Chriſt being any thing but God's inſtrument, employed by him.

I ſhall not enter into a diſcuſſion, what it was that the author of this epiſtle propoſed to teach concerning Jeſus Chriſt in this introduction, and eſpecially in the preceding ſentence, viz; *by whom alſo he* (God) *made the worlds*, τους αιωνας, or as it ought rather to be tranſlated, *the ages:* but that he did not intend to convey, that Chriſt was the original or ſubordinate creator of the viſible world, is proved by many judicious interpreters, Dr. Sykes, Lardner, and others, and not needful to repeat here.

The other citation, brought by our author, belongs to a paſſage juſt conſidered by us, Coloſſ. i. 16. And if we have there rightly explained its meaning, this, which that is a part of it, can by no means prove, what our author would draw from it; viz. that Jeſus Chriſt is the Preſerver of all things, and therefore the ſupreme God. For it relates not to this outward natural world, but to the *new creation*, the chriſtian world, who ſubſiſt by Chriſt, that is, are preſerved and kept together by their adherence to him and his doctrine: the apoſtle ſtill continuing to ſpeak in language borrowed from the old Moſaic account of the firſt creation.

and not αὐτῷ. And it is urged, that the MS. copies, which have accents added, read it with an aſpiration. But none of the ancient MSS. having any accents at all, every reader is at liberty to affix ſuch ſpirits as are moſt agreeable to the ſcope of any text. And it is eaſy to obſerve that our author in this verſe diſtinguiſhes αυτω and εαυτω; and therefore as αυτω juſt before relates to the Father, it is reaſonable to judge it does ſo here alſo." Peirce in locum.

Mr.

Mr. Robinſon goes on in the ſame conciſe, deciſive manner; IS THE MISSION OF THE PROPHETS A WORK OF GOD? *Jeſus Chriſt is* THE LORD GOD OF THE HOLY PROPHETS; and it WAS THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST *which teſtified to them beforehand the ſufferings of Chriſt and the glory that ſhould follow.*

It will be proper to produce the whole of the evidence upon which author here aſſerts Jeſus Chriſt to be *the Lord God of the holy prophets.*

Yet many years didſt Thou forbear them, and TESTIFIEDST *againſt them* BY THY SPIRIT IN THE PROPHETS; *yet would they not give ear: therefore gaveſt thou them into the hand of the people of the lands.* Nehemiah ix. 3.

And he ſaid unto them; theſe ſayings are faithful and true. And THE LORD GOD OF THE HOLY PROPHETS *ſent his angel to ſhew unto his ſervants the things which muſt ſhortly be done.*

I JESUS HAVE SENT MINE ANGEL TO TESTIFY *unto you theſe things in the churches.* Revel. xxii. 6. 16.

Searching what or what manner of time, THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST *which was in them did ſignify, when it* TESTIFIED *beforehand the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glory that ſhould follow.* 1 Pet. i. 11.

Firſt, let us take a view of what he brings to ſhew, that Jeſus Chriſt is *the Lord God of the holy prophets;* from the Revelation of St. John. At the concluſion of the prophecies in that book, for the encouragement of faithful chriſtians, it is declared, that the ſame God, who inſpired the antient prophets ſo punctually to foretell the circumſtances relating to Chriſt, for the comfort and inſtruction of

his people Ifrael; had ſent his angel, by the revelations then delivered, to ſupport the faith and patience of the chriſtian church. *Theſe ſayings are faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets ſent his angel to ſhew unto his ſervants the things which muſt ſhortly be done.*

Some ſpace after, Chriſt himſelf is introduced, thus ſpeaking; *I, Jeſus, have ſent mine angel to teſtify unto you theſe things in the churches.* And becauſe *Jeſus* is ſaid to have ſent his angel, as well as the *Lord God of the holy prophets* to have ſent his, Mr. Robinſon therefore infers Jeſus to be the Lord God of the holy prophets.

But our author ſhould have conſidered, that Almighty God, in giving a commiſſion to Chriſt to make theſe revelations, may have been ſaid to have ſent his angel on that account; ſince, according to the old adage, qui facit per alium, facit per ſe, *viz*; he that does a thing by another, does it himſelf.

And that God gave Chriſt theſe revelations, and a commiſſion to ſend his angel to make them known, is declared, as often obſerved, in the very firſt words of the book; viz. *The revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, which* God gave *unto him, to ſhew unto his ſervants, things which muſt ſhortly come to paſs.* It is extraordinary that Mr. Robinſon ſhould be ignorant of this, or pay no attention to it. It is certainly ſo far from proving Jeſus to be *the Lord God of the holy prophets*, as he would make him; that it ſhews him to be at the time *one of thoſe prophets* and ſervants of God, under a ſpecial commiſſion from him.

Of the ſame kind is his other aſſertion, that Chriſt was the Inſpirer of the antient prophets. For becauſe it happens, in that fine prayer and confeſſion of the Levites for themſelves and their nation, preſerved by Nehemiah; that they uſe this

language, viz. that *the Lord God teſtified againſt his people by his ſpirit in the prophets*; and becauſe the apoſtle Peter in like manner ſays, that *the ſpirit of Chriſt which was in the prophets teſtified beforehand his ſufferings*, he thence would have it inferred that Chriſt is the God that inſpired thoſe antient prophets; imagining the ſpirit of Chriſt which was in the prophets, to be Chriſt himſelf, or ſome power coming or derived from him.

But had he paid the leaſt attention to the apoſtle's explanation of his meaning, he would have ſeen his own great miſtake. For what St. Peter calls here *the ſpirit of Chriſt which was in the prophets*, he ſtiles *the holy ſpirit* in his ſecond epiſtle, where he ſays; *holy men of God ſpake, as they were moved by the holy ſpirit.* 2 Pet. i. 21. But it follows immediately after the verſe in queſtion, where the inſpiration of the prophets is mentioned—*Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themſelves, but unto us they did miniſter the things, which are now reported to you by them that have preached the goſpel unto you*, by the holy ſpirit *ſent down from heaven*. So that according to Peter's expreſs declaration in theſe citations of his own words, *the holy ſpirit*, that is, the ſame divine power, which had inſpired the old prophets, was in the apoſtles of Chriſt; and *this holy ſpirit ſent down from heaven* upon the latter, was thoſe gifts of a divine power, mentioned in the *Acts*, and elſewhere.

The *ſpirit of Chriſt* then, *which was in the prophets*, was not any energy or power exerted by Chriſt, but the energy and power of God himſelf. And it is called *the ſpirit of Chriſt*, becauſe Chriſt was the object about which it was exerciſed, in predicting the things concerning him; in the ſame way as it is called the *ſpirit* of *truth*, John xiv. 17. becauſe it was to teſtify and prove that the doc-

 trines

trines delivered by the apoſtles were true, i. e. from God, of divine authority.

Another inſtance brought by our author of ſuch works aſcribed to Chriſt as prove him to be God, is thus put by him.

" Is the SALVATION of ſinners a work of God? *Chriſt is* THE SAVIOUR *of the world.* John iv. 42. —THE AUTHOR *of eternal ſalvation to all them that obey him.* Hebr. v. 9.

When once the imagination is forcibly impreſſed with a particular idea, a man will often believe he ſees ſtrange ſights, which no mortal but himſelf can perceive. This muſt be our author's excuſe for adding to his catalogue, ſuch proofs of Chriſt being the moſt high God, as he here produces. What if he be called (John iv. 42.) by a woman of Samaria, *the Saviour of the world?* She certainly ſuppoſed him to anſwer that character, though ſhe looked upon him in no higher light than that of the Meſſiah, the great promiſed prophet of God. Nor from his being ſo called, is there any ground to think him any other. For although God is alſo our Saviour, this may be very conſiſtent with Chriſt being ſo called, without lifting him up above the condition of a creature. This Mr. Robinſon would have diſcerned, if he could have conſidered thoſe Scriptures without prejudice, which teach that GOD *is our Saviour*, as he formed the benevolent plan and appointed the method by which we are to inherit eternal life: and CHRIST alſo *is our Saviour*, as commiſſioned and employed by Almighty God in the great work: a diſtinction St. Paul often makes. Thus Tit. iii. 4, 5, 6. *After that the kindneſs and love of* GOD OUR SAVIOUR *toward man appeared,——by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy ſpirit, which he ſhed on us abundantly through* JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR.

SAVIOUR. See alſo 2 Tim. i. 8, 9, 10. And another apoſtle expreſsly affirms Chriſt to have been God's meſſenger and ſervant in ſaving mankind: *We have ſeen, and do teſtify, that the Father ſent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.* 1 John iv. 14.

There is ſtill a more extraordinary overſight in the other paſſage produced by Mr. Robinſon, to confirm what he calls, Chriſt's *claims* to be Jehovah. For if he had only attended to the verſe preceding that which he quotes, he would have ſeen that the all-perfect, unchangeable God could not be the perſon intended; becauſe the perſon ſpoken of, *this Saviour*, was one, who was diſciplined to virtue and obedience to God, and fitted for his work, by ſufferings appointed to him for that end: *Though he were a ſon, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he ſuffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal ſalvation unto all them that obey him.* Hebr. v. 8, 9.

Our author thus cloſes his liſt of thoſe *works*, which, according to him, evidence Chriſt to be the ſupreme God.

"IS THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN a work of God? *The Son of man hath power to* FORGIVE SINS."

As Mr. Robinſon throughout ſpares himſelf the trouble of drawing his concluſions, leaving that work to his readers, we may ſuppoſe his deſign here is to aſſert, that ſince it is the ſole prerogative of God to forgive ſins, and Chriſt here declares himſelf poſſeſſed of that power, therefore he muſt be God. But ſhould it not have occurred to him, that this power of forgiving ſins is not ſo fixed and appropriated to the Supreme Being, but that he may delegate it to others? Thus Nathan the prophet pronounced to David upon his repentance; (2 Sam. xii. 13.) *The* LORD *alſo hath put away thy ſin: thou ſhalt not die.* Our Lord

alſo ſays to his apoſtles (John xx. 21. 23.) *As my Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you. Whoſeſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoſeſoever ſins ye retain, they are retained.* Jeſus here acknowleges his own miſſion from God, and conſequently all his powers to fulfil it, to come from him, that of forgiving men their ſins among the reſt. And the apoſtle Paul, in his exhortation in one place, to mutual kindneſs and forbearance, recommending the example of Chriſt, uſes theſe words; (Coloſſ. iii. 13.) *even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye.* But in another place he explains himſelf, that it was only, as commiſſioned by Almighty God, and not from any power of his own, that Chriſt forgave ſins: Eph. iv. 32. *Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, by* (x) *Chriſt, hath forgiven you.*

It ſeems to me to have been proved, that our author has miſtaken and miſapplied every paſſage of Scripture brought by him under this head, to prove Chriſt, from his performing ſuch works, as he aſſerts are peculiar to the Deity, to be the ſupreme God. But were it much otherwiſe, he muſt ſurely be unmindful of the fallibility of human judgment, who can break out into ſuch ſtrains of cenſure as the following, upon the ſacred writers themſelves, if the ſenſe he fixes upon their words be not the true one.

" Conſider now, ſays he, into what contradictions " theſe writers muſt fall, if Jeſus Chriſt be not God. " They contradict one another, they contradict " themſelves. They degrade writings, which, they " pretend, are inſpired, below the loweſt ſcribbling

(x) Not, as in our engliſh tranſlation, *for Chriſt's ſake*: but εν Χριστω, *by Chriſt*; as hath been often remarked.

" of

" of the meaneſt authors." He then thus continues his career, in triumph, as it were;

" *In the beginning*, ſays Moſes, GOD *created the* " *heavens and the earth.* Gen. i. 1. It is a miſ- " take, ſays the apoſtle John; *In the beginning*, " THE WORD THAT WAS MADE FLESH, *made all* " *things, and without him was not any thing made* " *that was made.* John i. 1. 14. 3. Elihu aſks, " WHO *hath diſpoſed the whole world?* Jehovah " aſks out of the whirlwind, WHO *laid the mea-* " *ſures thereof?* WHO *ſtretched the line upon it?* " WHO *laid the corner ſtone thereof?* Job xxxiv. " 13. xxxviii. 1. 5. 6. All the Old Teſtament " writers reply, THE LORD OF HOSTS *founded the* " *heavens, the earth, the world, and the fulneſs* " *thereof.* Pſalm lxxxix. 11. No ſuch thing ſays " the apoſtle John; THE WORD, *that was made* " *fleſh, and dwelt among us, made the world.* John " i. 14. 10."

The contradiction is all his own. There is no difference or contrariety between Moſes and the apoſtle, or the apoſtle and the Old Teſtament writers. Moſes and the prophets, with whom the apoſtle John agrees, deſcribe the firſt formation of all things, as the effect of the ſame ſupreme cauſe, Jehovah, God, the Father, without the agency or interference of any other perſon. And THE WORD, of which the apoſtle treats, as above ſhewn, was not any diſtinct perſon from God, from the Father and Creator of all things; but HIS wiſdom and energy divine; which dwelt in, and was communicated to the man Chriſt Jeſus; and which, in an inferior degree, dwelt in and was communicated to prophets and apoſtles. He continues in the ſame vein,

" *Hezekiah looks up to heaven, and ſays, o Lord* " *God of Iſrael, thou art the God, even thou alone,*

" *of all the kingdoms of the earth*; *thou haſt made* " *heaven and earth!* 2 Kings xix. 15. Paul lifts " up his eyes to Jeſus, and ſays; THY THRONE, " O GOD, *is for ever and ever.* THOU, LORD, *in* " *the beginning haſt laid the foundation of the earth,* " *and the heavens are the work of* THY *hands.* " Hebr. i. 8. 10."

This is all mere oratorical flouriſh. Paul's lifting up his eyes to Jeſus, is a flight of Mr. Robinſon's own imagination, without any ſupport from the ſacred text. For the words, in the original, are a prophetic apoſtrophe of the Almighty Father to the Meſſiah; and in what way ſoever they are taken, have been ſhewn above, (p. 39. 42.) to afford no ground to conceive of Chriſt, as any other than an inferior dependent being. Where alſo our author's other citation, *Thou*, LORD, *in the beginning haſt laid the foundation of the earth*, &c. was proved to be an addreſs to God, and not to Chriſt.

SECTION VI.

Whether the like worſhip is given, or commanded to be given, in the Scriptures, to Jeſus Chriſt, as to Almighty God.

IN the next diviſion of Mr. Robinſon's work, he maintains Chriſt to be the moſt high God, from the worſhip paid to him being the ſame that is paid to God.

And he begins very well with citing thoſe words of St. Matthew, as a command of God, repeated and reinforced by our Saviour; *thou ſhalt worſhip* THE LORD THY GOD, *and* HIM ONLY *ſhalt thou ſerve.* Matth. iv. 10. Deut. ii. 20.

But to prevent the reader from being impoſed upon and miſled, as our author has impoſed upon

and

and deceived himſelf; there is one circumſtance to be mentioned, which one wonders ſhould not have been attended to; *viz.* that the word προσκυνεω, *to worſhip*, is not deſcriptive only of the honour which is appropriated to God, but is indifferently uſed to ſignify the honour and reſpect which are paid to ſuperiors of all kinds, in heaven or on earth.

If this diſtinction of civil and religious worſhip, as they are often denominated, had been adverted to, much of what our author has advanced on this head might have been ſpared. But to proceed with our examination.

After having cited the authority of God and of Chriſt, that the LORD God, or Jehovah God only is to be worſhiped, he inſtantly adds;

"Yet theſe very Scriptures command *all the angels of God to worſhip Chriſt*;" for which he refers to Hebr. i. 6. *And, when he again bringeth the firſt begotten* (or rather (*y*) *firſt born*) *into the world, he ſaith*; *And let all the angels of God worſhip him.*

According to the beſt interpreters, this *bringing again of the firſt born*, or dearly beloved, into the world, was effected, when God having raiſed Chriſt to life, the promiſed *holy ſpirit*, or various divine gifts and powers were beſtowed by him, to enable his followers to preach the goſpel with ſucceſs

(*y*) N. B. The very ſame word is uſed Exod. iv. 22. *Thus ſaith the* LORD; *Iſrael is my ſon, my firſt born*, υιος πρωτοτοκος μου; i. e. beſt beloved; ſpeaking after the manner of men, who are wont to ſhew partiality to a firſt born child. And ſo our tranſlators would have rendered the ſame word here, (οταν δε παλιν εισαγη τον πρωτοτοκον εις την οικουμενην) not *firſt begotten*, but *firſt born*; if they had not been prepoſſeſſed without cauſe, that there was ſomething myſterious always to be underſtood, when ſuch words were applied to Chriſt. See Peirce upon the paſſage.

through the world; and probably to this laſt circumſtance, the command given to angels to worſhip Chriſt, has ſome reference, as the extraordinary miniſter of God in the firſt propagation of the goſpel.

But what is this? or how does it prove, that Chriſt is to be worſhiped as God, and that he is the ſupreme God? There is no ground whatſoever to underſtand it of worſhip properly divine, but of ſuch worſhip as *God commanded* to be paid to Chriſt; ſuch reverence and reſpect, or whatever elſe might be intended by the phraſe, as was ſuitable and due to ſo excellent a character, and one ſo highly honoured and exalted by Almighty God.

But with this our author is by no means ſatisfied: for he builds much on this text, which he repeats twice afterwards; and in one place launches out in the following very extraordinary manner, to prove, that it is ſuch worſhip as was paid to God himſelf, which the angels are commanded here to pay to Chriſt, and ſuch as proves Chriſt to be God. I ſhall give his words at length, leſt I ſhould be thought to injure his argument.

(*z*) " I cannot diſmiſs this article, ſays he, without " remarking one paſſage more, the quotation of " which would give me *the moſt contemptible idea* of " the writer's abilities, did I not believe that he took " Jeſus Chriſt to be God. This writer is St. Paul. " St. Paul, in the firſt of Hebrews, elevates Chriſt " above the whole creation, and *requires all the* " *angels to adore him.* We aſk; by what authority " do you require the celeſtial ſpirits to adore a " man? Becauſe, replies he, God *ſaith, Let all* " *the angels of God worſhip* HIM. We anſwer; " there is no ſuch paſſage in the genuine Scrip-

(*z*) Mr. Robinſon's Plea, &c. p. 43, 44.

" tures.

" tures. There is, indeed, a paſſage in the ninety-
" ſeventh pſalm, which ſaith, *Confounded be all*
" *they, that ſerve graven images, that boaſt them-*
" *ſelves of idols: worſhip* JEHOVAH *all ye gods,*
" or *angels.* But how does a command to worſhip
" JEHOVAH apply to the worſhip of JESUS? If
" Jeſus and Jehovah be not the ſame, art not thou
" the leaſt and laſt of all pretenders to reaſon?
" Let us hear the pſalmiſt. THE LORD *reigneth,*
" *let the earth rejoice: let the multitude of the iſles*
" *be glad thereof. Clouds and darkneſs are round*
" *about* HIM: *righteouſneſs and judgment are the*
" *habitation of* HIS *throne. A fire goeth before*
" HIM, *and burneth up* HIS *enemies round about.*
" HIS *lightning enlightned the world: the earth*
" *ſaw and trembled. The hills melted like wax at*
" *the preſence of* JEHOVAH; *at the preſence of* THE
" LORD OF THE WHOLE EARTH. *The heavens de-*
" *clare* HIS *righteouſneſs, and all the people ſee* HIS
" *glory. Confounded be all they, that ſerve graven*
" *images, that boaſt themſelves of idols:* WORSHIP
" HIM ALL YE GODS. The natural impreſſions,
" which theſe paſſages make on the reader, are
" theſe. The pſalmiſt deſcribes the SUPREME
" God, and commands the angels to worſhip HIM.
" St. Paul quotes the pſalm, applies it to JESUS,
" and commands the angels to worſhip HIM. Jeſus
" is therefore, in St. Paul's account, GOD SU-
" PREME."

Ordinary readers are much to be pitied, who are eaſily borne down and overcome by ſuch a profuſion of words, and ſtrong aſſeverations concerning a particular point; and eſpecially when a writer has no ſcruples of making an apoſtle reſponſible for his own very fallible judgment, and is ſo bold as to repreſent St. Paul as a contemptible writer, if he did not intend in this quotation to declare

declare Chriſt to be the SUPREME GOD, exactly according to Mr. Robinſon's ideas.

The plain ſtate of the fact, with which our author makes ſuch a parade and flouriſh, appears to be this.

The learned are much divided, from what part of the Old Teſtament, the words on which Mr. Robinſon would erect ſuch a doctrine concerning Chriſt, are taken. Pyle, Sykes, and others maintain that they are a citation from Deuteron. xxxii. 43; and that though they are not to be found in our preſent Hebrew copies, nor conſequently in our Engliſh verſion, which is taken from the Hebrew, they are nevertheleſs to be met with moſt exactly in the Septuagint tranſlation of the Old Teſtament into Greek, which was moſt probably made uſe of and followed by St. Paul. The words in this ancient verſion, are; *Rejoice, ye heavens, with him, and* let all the angels of God worſhip him! *Rejoice, ye nations, with his people!* And the paſſage is conſidered, as pointing forwards to the Meſſiah and his kingdom; which was to be matter of joy not to the Iſraelites only, but to all people. And this interpretation ſeems to be confirmed by the application, which St. Paul makes of the latter clauſe of it, in another place; as foretelling the bringing in of the gentiles to ſhare in the privileges of the goſpel, and become the church and people of God with the Jews; where we read, Rom. xv. 10. *And again he ſaith; Rejoice, ye gentiles, with his people!*

Theſe juſt and well founded doubts, that the words in queſtion are not quoted from Pſalm xcvii. ſhould have diminiſhed our author's great confidence, that St. Paul took them from that Pſalm; and we ſhall do well all of us, not to be over-poſitive, or to make any important point depend upon the citations from the Old Teſtament

by

by the writers of the New, where there is ſo much room for doubt and uncertainty.

But conceding to him, which is far from being certain, that our apoſtle did make his citation from Pſalm xcvii. 7; it muſt then be ſuppoſed, that the writer ſpeaks by inſpiration of the future times of the goſpel. And if this be the fact, the exulting ſtrain with which it begins; *The* LORD (JEHOVAH) *reigneth: let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of iſles be glad thereof:* will be a declaration of the ſetting up of the kingdom of God upon earth, and calling upon all its inhabitants to rejoice in and partake of ſo great a bleſſing. The ſame again is ſignified, ver. 6. *The heavens declare his righteouſneſs, and all the people ſee his glory:* or rather all the *peoples*; a familiar and uſual phraſe, when the Gentiles are intended, as Pearce remarks, and as Bp. Lowth in his Iſaiah always renders the word. And with reſpect to the clauſe, *worſhip him, all ye gods!* whether by the term in the original, which we render *gods*, be underſtood, the princes and magiſtrates of the earth, or angelic beings; its primary ſignification would be, a freſh call upon them to worſhip *Jehovah, God*, as manifeſting himſelf in the Meſſiah, the appointed king of this new kingdom, that was to be ſet up. For it was a general perſuaſion among the Jews, that God was to dwell in an extraordinary manner in their Meſſiah; and therefore they were wont to apply, what was ſpoken of God in their prophetic writings, to the Meſſiah. But if the words in the Pſalmiſt, *worſhip him, all ye gods*, are to be conſidered as immediately applied to Chriſt, for which I can ſee no grounds, and a command to worſhip him in perſon, it cannot be underſtood of ſuch worſhip, as denominates him the SUPREME GOD; but of ſuch as is due to a character of conſummate worth,

worth, to a moſt excellent creature, highly honoured and exalted by God; and this is confirmed by the worſhip mentioned by the apoſtle, as being *ordered* to be paid him, after his having *been brought again into the world*; i. e. after his having been raiſed to an immortal life, by the extraordinary interpoſition and power of God: but GOD, as we have often occaſion to remind ſome men, CANNOT DIE.

Mr. Robinſon's next aſſertion of the ſame worſhip paid to Chriſt as to God, from which he would deduce Chriſt to be the moſt High God; is brought from Philip. ii. 10. "*At*, (or rather *in*) *the name of Jeſus, every knee, in heaven, and in earth ſhould bow.*" But he expects the reader, as uſual, to take the matter to be as he ſtates it, upon his bare word. A brief conſideration of the whole paſſage will ſhew how much he is miſtaken.

The apoſtle is profeſſedly teaching his Philippian converts a leſſon of humility, from the example of Chriſt. *Let this mind be in you*, ſays he, *which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus: who being in the form of God*, i. e. having the form, the appearance or likeneſs of God; which conſiſted in, and was manifeſted by thoſe divine powers, which he exerted, of healing diſeaſes, raiſing the dead, by a word's ſpeaking;

—*thought it not robbery* to be equal *with God.* All perſons of learning and judgment will own this not to be the ſenſe of the apoſtle's words; but it ſhould be, (*a*) *he thought not the being* LIKE TO *God*

(*a*) Mr. Robinſon, in another part of his tract, p. 55, deals very negligently by his readers, in taking up with our faulty Engliſh tranſlation of this paſſage, and thus expatiating with great pomp upon it.

"Jeſus Chriſt, being in the form of God, thought it not "robbery to be equal with God. That is, ſay ſome, Jeſus, "not

God a thing to be greedily seized by him, or, was not tenacious of retaining it; made no ostentatious show of this form of and likeness to God, i. e. of the divine powers bestowed upon him;

—*but emptied him himself*, αλλ' εαυτον εκενωσε, i. e. emptied himself of that form of God; demeaned himself as if he had not been invested with such divine powers.

taking the form of a servant,

not being actually a servant, but putting himself in the state and condition of one: devoting himself to toil and labour for the good of others. Hence he says, *Whoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministred unto, but to minister.* Matt. xx. 27, 28. and Luke xxii. 27. *I am among you as he that serveth.*

—*Being* (not, as we translate it, *being* made) *in the likeness of men*,

that is, subject to infirmities, pain, and suffering, as mortal men are: for this is a frequent sense of the term here used for man, ανθρωπος. See Acts x. 26. and Heb. ii. 14. 17. iv. 15.

—*And being found in fashion*, or *being in figure, as a man*;

i. e. being in his whole exterior nothing above the most ordinary rank of men; aiming at nothing

" not being God, thought not of the robbery of being equal " with God. Glorious humility! A creature did not " think of ranking himself with the creator! The hum- " blest effect of the wisest human mind was only not to equal " itself with Jehovah!" His readers should not have been uninformed, that the apostle says nothing of *the robbery of being equal to* God, nor gives any occasion to entertain such an idea of the holy Jesus, as pretending to any thing of the kind; but, that he was not vain of that *likeness* to the most high God, with which he had been favoured, nor eager to make display of it.

beyond

beyond it; affecting no ſtate or pomp, but the contrary;

—*he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs.*

i. e. his humility extended itſelf ſtill farther: for in obedience to God, and to confirm the truth of the goſpel, he willingly ſubmitted to death, attended with infamy and the moſt exquiſite tortures.

—*Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him* (rather, *hath graciouſly beſtowed upon* εχαρισατο, or *favoured him with*) *a name, which is above every name;*

i. e. on account of his humility and obedience, God hath greatly advanced him, and given him out of his free bounty a dignity or authority, above what he ever granted to any other.

—*that in the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth.*

St. Paul ſeems here to refer to that great authority to be conferred upon Chriſt at the day of judgment; of which he himſelf ſpeaks, Romans xiv. 9, 10. But it is difficult to account, by what connexion of ideas our author could impoſe upon himſelf, ſo as to produce this paſſage as evidence of ſuch divine worſhip being commanded to be paid to Chriſt, which proved him to be the ſupreme God. For,

1. The phraſe bowing the knee in the name of any one, implies in itſelf nothing more than an acknowlegment of the authority of the perſon, and of the reſpect due to him. See Gen. xli. 43. So that the apoſtle might ſay, that God had commanded every knee to bow in the name of Je-

ſus (*b*), without the leaſt thought of thoſe perſons offering divine worſhip to him. And

2. The affixing ſuch a meaning to the words, is contrary to the very context and declaration of the apoſtle at the time; who teaches us, that this name or authority, whatever be to be underſtood by it, was the gratuitous gift of Almighty God to Jeſus. And can he be the ſupreme God, who depends for what he poſſeſſes upon the favour and bounty of another?

But the apoſtle himſelf precludes all ſuch ſuppoſition and interpretation, by immediately explaining, what he intended by bowing in the name of Jeſus; namely,

—*and that every tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father*;

i. e. all mankind are called upon and bound to acknowlege and openly confeſs Jeſus Chriſt to be

(*b*) Our author's talent of amplification may be ſeen in the uſe which he makes of this paſſage, where he is ſpeaking of the inſuperable difficulties, (*but in his own imagination only*,) which attend the denial of the divinity of our Lord.

P. 61. "The writers of the New Teſtament required "EVERY KNEE *to bow at the name of Jeſus*, every knee *in* "*heaven*, every knee *in earth*, and every knee *under the* "*earth*; they demanded this homage to be paid to Chriſt "by men, who had always proteſted againſt the paying of "ſuch homage to any but God; however, (*this our author* "*adds by way of irony*) they never intended to perſuade men "to worſhip Jeſus as *God*, they only meant to procure a "high degree of veneration to him as a very great *man*."

Here is however amplification not a little beyond the truth: *for no inſtance can be produced of the New Teſtament writers demanding ſuch homage to be paid to Chriſt by men, which they had always proteſted againſt paying to any but God.* And however Mr. Robinſon may repreſent it, ſeriouſly or otherwiſe, *the New Teſtament writers never perſuaded, nor intended to perſuade men, to pay any worſhip to Jeſus Chriſt, but ſuch as was due to an excellent creature of conſummate virtue, and therefore highly honoured and exalted of God.*

Lord;

Lord: i. e. to bow the knee to him, to own his authority; but then, they are to confeſs alſo, that he is ſo by the gift of God who conſtituted him ſuch; and alſo that the honour and glory of it, primarily and ultimately belongs to God, the Father; i. e. to HIM, from whom he himſelf and all other perſons, have received their being and all their powers.

His next inſtance of divine worſhip being commanded in the Scriptures to be given to Chriſt, is contained in thoſe words of our Lord; John v. 23. *That all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.*

But how are the words of this humble Saviour perverted and abuſed, who was far from aiming at any thing of the kind? and who juſt before, ver. 19, had ſaid; *The Son can do nothing of himſelf:* and who alſo immediately after the words which our author cites, gives a reaſon for the honour he required to be paid to himſelf, and ſhews it was ſomething infinitely ſhort of divine honour and worſhip: viz. *He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which* HATH SENT HIM. The honour he demands for himſelf, was that only which was due to one, who was *ſent of God*; the reſpect belonging to one bearing God's authority in the high degree that he did; and nothing more.

The apoſtles of Chriſt never ſay that their divine Maſter gave any command for men to worſhip him. Which they would have done and have appealed to this text, if it had been ſo underſtood by them. The misfortune is, that men come to the reading of Scripture, under the influence of former prepoſſeſſions, which makes them apply its words to purpoſes very different from what they were intended to ſignify. But Mr. Ro-

binſon is not alone deceived here. The famous Socinus, though he held Chriſt to be a human being, contended that he was the object of worſhip and prayer, and placed much dependence upon this paſſage for it.

Our author's next aſſertion of the ſame worſhip being paid to Chriſt as to God, is couched in theſe terms. " Twenty times in the New Teſtament, " *grace, mercy,* and *peace,* are implored of *Chriſt,* " together with the Father."

Nothing more whatſoever is offered; but we are to take the fact to be as he pronounces it to be, in this brief way, and on his bare word. Judicious perſons will wonder at ſo great preſumption, where there is ſuch a poor foundation for it. It is incredible, however, what power theſe general authoritative deciſions have over weak minds: ſo that it ſeems not fair or equitable, and is doing ſuch perſons a great injury, to make uſe of them in dubious points, eſpecially ſuch as are of importance. As our author does not produce, nor refer to, one of the numerous inſtances which according to him prove his point, that Chriſt is the object of prayer together with the Father; I muſt not decline the trouble of ſelecting ſuch as I apprehend he might refer to, and laying them before the reader, to form his judgment of them.

Rom. i. 7. *Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

1 Cor. i. 3. *Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

2 Cor. i. 2. *Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

—— xiii. 14. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the love of God, and the communion of the holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.*

Gal. i. 3. *Grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

Eph. i. 2. *Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

—— vi. 23. *Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

Philip. i. 2. *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

Col. i. 2. *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

1 Theſſ. i. 1. *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

——— iii. 11. *Now God himſelf, even our Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, direct our way unto you.*

2 Theſſ. i. 2. *Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

——— ii. 16, 17. *Now our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and God, even our Father,—comfort your hearts,* &c.

1 Tim. i. 2. *Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father, and Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

2 Tim. i. 2. *Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

Tit. i. 4. *Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour.*

Philem. — 3. *Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

2 John — 3. *Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.*

Rev. i. 4, 5. *Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the ſeven ſpirits which are before his throne; and from Jeſus, the faithful witneſs, the firſt-born from the dead.—*

It

It will be perceived, that fourteen out of these nineteen instances, for I count no more, are almost word for word the same; and are nothing but a customary salutation, or greeting, used by the apostles in their letters. Mr. Robinson calls it, *praying for*, or *imploring* grace and mercy of Christ together with the Father. But his saying it, is no proof of its being so. Had it really been so, the words would have been directly addressed to God, and to Christ, in some such way as this; "*O God*, "our Father, and o Jesus Christ, our Lord, vouch-"safe grace, mercy, and peace," &c. But the writers address themselves, not to God or Christ; but to the persons to whom their epistles are sent, Grace be *to you*; and therefore their words can only be considered as devout wishes of good for them; *viz.* that the grace, mercy, and peace, of which God was the author, and Christ had been the messenger and instrument to convey them to mankind, might be imparted to them; in short, that they might partake of all the blessings of the gospel: a very proper beginning of a letter from an apostle, where a prayer would have been less suitable.

But the last instance here produced from *Revelation* i. 4, 5. will make it very evident, that it is a very wrong turn given to these apostolic salutations, to call them *prayers*. For if so, it would follow that we are to pray to angels as well as to God; since according to this way of interpretation, grace and peace are there *implored*, not only of *God*, and of *Jesus*, but of *the seven spirits before the throne*, who are afterwards called, (v. 6.) *the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth*; and by some, though on what authority I know not, supposed to be the guardian angels of the seven churches, to whom St. John writes.

The remaining inſtances are ſomewhat different in form; though not unlike in ſubſtance, or in their real meaning, from the ſalutations I have juſt explained. For, 1 Theſſ. iii. 11. *Now God himſelf, even our Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt direct our way unto you*; is not an imploring or invoking of God and of Chriſt: but only a pious wiſh, that the apoſtle's journey to them might be ſo ordered by divine providence, that the glory of God, and the ſucceſs of the goſpel might be promoted by it. So, 2 Theſſ. ii. 16, 17. *Now our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and God even our Father,——comfort your hearts*; he wiſhes them all the comforts that ariſe from the goſpel of Chriſt, and the favour of the heavenly Father of all, therein revealed.

Mr. Robinſon next affirms; "Baptiſm is an "act of worſhip, performed in *his* (i. e. Chriſt's) "name."

The Scripture-account of baptiſm, Matth. xxviii. 19. gives no ground to call it an Act of worſhip done to Chriſt, or even to Almighty God himſelf. It is rather an act of obedience to Chriſt, as the meſſenger of God, and a (John iii. 2.) teacher ſent from him. And though the ceremony of baptiſm, as an initiation into Chriſt's religion, may be fitly accompanied with prayer to God, it may be performed without it; and the inſtitution and form itſelf, as it lies in the ſacred writings, does not indicate it to be any act of worſhip to Chriſt in the leaſt degree, unleſs ſo far as it is an acknowlegement of his authority from God to teach his will to mankind.

The idea, which the hebrew nation, and among them, our Lord and his apoſtles, entertained of any one's baptizing people, was the making them his diſciples, engaging them to be of his ſect and perſuaſion.

ſuaſion. Hence John iv. 1. (c) making diſciples is ſynonymous with baptizing them. And the apoſtle Paul ſays, (1 Cor. i. 4, 5.) *I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Criſpus and Gaius; leſt any ſhould ſay, that I had baptized into mine own name:* not as if the baptizing them into his own name would have been an act of worſhip paid to him as God; but leſt he ſhould be thought to ſet up himſelf for a leader, and not Chriſt alone. So we read, (1 Cor. x. 1, 2.) that the Iſraelites *were baptized into Moſes.* But no one imagines that the language implied an act of divine worſhip to Moſes; but only the acknowleging him to be their divine leader and deliverer. And ſo the being baptized into the name of Chriſt, is an acknowlegement of him as our divine maſter and Saviour; and nothing more. To finiſh the ſubject; Baptiſm is nothing but the preſcribed mode of making diſciples, or initiating perſons into Chriſt's religion: *Go ye, and make diſciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy ſpirit.* Matth. xxviii. 19. And Chriſt being herein joined and ranked with the Father, is no more a proof of his being one God with the Father, or God equal to him, than that which St. Paul ſays, 1 Tim. v. 21. is a proof of the *elect angels,* being one God with the Father, or ſo many different Gods equal to him. *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and* the elect angels, *that thou obſerve theſe things.*

Mr. Robinſon proceeds; " *Swearing* is an act " of worſhip, a ſolemn appeal in important caſes " to the omniſcient God; and this appeal is made " to Chriſt. Rom. ix. 1."

(c) *When therefore the Lord knew, how the Phariſees had heard, that Jeſus made and baptized more diſciples than John.*

This pretended proof from Scripture, of Chriſt being the object of worſhip, becauſe the apoſtle is ſuppoſed to ſwear by, or appeal to him as omniſcient, is unworthy of regard. If our author had attended properly to the words uſed, he would have found, that there is no appeal whatſoever made to Chriſt by the apoſtle, but a ſolemn declaration, in the ſincerity of his heart, as became a chriſtian, of his feelings and concern for his countrymen; *I ſay the truth in Chriſt*; or *as a chriſtian*; (for ſo, εν Χριστω, (*d*) properly ſignifies) *I lye not*; *my conſcience alſo* (guided and enlightened) *by the holy ſpirit, bearing me witneſs*; *that I have great heavineſs, and continual ſorrow in my heart.*

Our author's next aſſertion of ſuch worſhip being paid to Chriſt, as argued him to be the moſt high God, is thus put. "The committing of the "ſoul to God at death is a ſacred act of wor-"ſhip; in the performance of this act Stephen "died, ſaying, *Lord Jeſus, receive my ſpirit.* Acts "vii. 59."

Upon this caſe of Stephen, Mr. Robinſon ſpends eleven pages. He maintains, that the holy martyr's committing his ſpirit to Chriſt, is an exact counterpart to that of David, Pſ. xxxi. 5. *Into thine hand I commit my ſpirit: Thou haſt redeemed me, o* LORD, *God of truth!* But he forgets to remind his reader of the very different circumſtances of the two caſes; and that Stephen ſpeaks of the perſon he addreſſes, not as being Jehovah, God; but *the* SON OF MAN, *ſtanding at the right hand of God.* This makes it utterly impoſſible that the two caſes ſhould be alike, and that this application of Ste-

(*d*) In like manner towards the concluſion of the ſame epiſtle, xvi. 7 *Salute——my kinſmen, who were* in Chriſt, (i. e. chriſtians,) *before me*, &c. &c.

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phen to Chriſt, ſhould proceed from a perſuaſion of his being the ſame *God of truth*, to whom David recommended his ſpirit.

To as little purpoſe is that ſoliloquy of a Jew upon the ſame ſubject, whom our author introduces as living at the time of the tranſaction; but only to darken a plain ſubject with words that have little ſenſe in them, and are quite beſide the purpoſe. For, in reality, no Jew would or could have had any ſcruple, in offering the like addreſs to Elijah, had he beheld the prophet in the ſame exalted ſtation, and been poſſeſſed with the ſame belief concerning his great power, and favour with God, which Stephen entertained concerning Jeſus. So that all the oratory of this *feigned perſonage*, calculated to lay hold of a certain rank of readers, comes to nothing; and they are only frightful words, without any ground of truth, with which he makes *his* Jew-friend bring in a verdict againſt the holy martyr: viz. "*Stephen was guilty: he died with that confidence in a creature, which he ought to have placed in God alone. Curſed is the man, that truſteth in man, and maketh fleſh his arm.* Jer. xvii. 5."

Stephen's truſt was only in that power, which he believed Almighty God had granted to Chriſt; *who is the reſurrection and the life*; (John xi. 25.) and by whoſe voice the dead are to be called to life, at the laſt day.

Our author then preſents his reader with a long dialogue, in ſix pages, of his own fabric and device, between two other ſuppoſed Jew-chriſtians, Timon and Caleb, whom he makes to be living at the time in Jeruſalem, and one of them preſent at the ſtoning of Stephen. The whole of it is very obſcure and dull, contrary to our author's uſual

manner, with very little reſemblance of truth in the circumſtances, or force of argument. But thoſe who can be pleaſed with ſuch ſort of fictions, will do well to read what he has put together.

A late excellent perſon ſeems to have ſtated this whole affair of Stephen's addreſs to Chriſt, in ſo juſt a light, and ſo plain a manner, that I ſhall give the reader the concluſion of it, as a proper reply to Mr. Robinſon's rhetoric upon it.

" In truth, this of *Stephen* ſeems to have been a *ſingular* excepted caſe; and, perhaps, the only one that can be mentioned, where our Saviour is invocated as the immediate and direct object of a devout addreſs.

" And we may, in a great meaſure, account for it. *Stephen*, we reaſonably conclude, would have called upon *God*, when thus dying by the hands of violence, as he had at all paſt times been wont to direct his prayer, had he not been ſurprized with a ſight of the man Chriſt Jeſus, God's firſt miniſter, ſtanding at the right hand of the glory, ready to receive him. He ſaw him in the form and likeneſs of the *Son of man*, or of *the lamb that had been ſlain*, as repreſented in the viſion, *Revelation* v. 6. This would naturally, and with the utmoſt propriety, lead him to call on Jeſus to help him, (*e*) or eagerly to place his confidence in that ſuccour he ſhewed himſelf officially ready to give him.

(*e*) Although Stephen did not addreſs himſelf to Jeſus, and call out to him, at the very moment of the viſion; yet it is evident from his being inſtantly ſeized by the mad rabble upon the mention of it, and hurried out of the city to be ſtoned, the traces and impreſſion of it would remain ſtrong upon his mind ſo as to put him upon ſuch an application to Chriſt, which he would not have uſed at any other time, and in a different ſituation.

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He well knew what he had taught his disciples to expect from him, as *the resurrection and the life*, or as the vital head of all his followers. This was as natural as it had been for his disciples, who had seen his miraculous power, to call on him thus in a great storm at sea; *Lord, save us; we perish.* Matth. viii. 24, 25. All the while, and in both cases, *Stephen* and the disciples must have well known, that it was their duty to call upon God, as their supreme refuge in all perils and extremities. And inasmuch as, like *Martha*, they were all of them fully persuaded, that whatever Jesus would ask of God, God would grant it; nevertheless, it is not to be wondered at, that upon their being with Christ, or seeing him, they should readily apply to him, well knowing that he had great power with God, and stood in the highest favour with him.

" Upon the whole, the *example* of Stephen is no rule to others, unless they are encouraged by a like vision. And no *single, extraordinary* instance will justify our departing from the universal and eternally established rule of observance, *viz.* that the address of supreme worship be made to the one God, and to HIM alone; whom we christians know to be the God and Father of all. There is no other who can be the object of what is properly and truly called, *religious worship* (*f*)."

(*f*) " An Enquiry, whether we have any Scripture-warrant for a direct address of supplication, praise, or thanksgiving, either to the Son or to the Holy Ghost. By the late Rev. Paul Cardale, &c. p. 41, &c. Printed for Johnson, 1776."

In this tract, as in all the author's serious and valuable writings, there is much to be learned; especially concerning the Being to whom our prayers and worship are to be addressed; whether to one person, that of the Almighty Father, or to two other persons besides, in conjunction, and upon an equality with him.

SEC.

SECTION VII.

Whether there be any paſſages belonging to JEHOVAH, *the Supreme God, in the Old Teſtament, and applied to Jeſus Chriſt in the New Teſtament, which prove Jeſus Chriſt to be* JEHOVAH, *the Supreme God?*

MR. Robinſon's next diviſion of his work, is thus ſtated and introduced. "Obſerve, my "brethren, the application of the Old Teſtament "paſſages which belong to Jehovah, to Jeſus Chriſt "in the New Teſtament, and try whether you can "acquit the writers of the New Teſtament of "*miſrepreſentation*, on ſuppoſition that Jeſus is "not God."

One would think that even thoſe whom our author may be ſuppoſed here immediately to addreſs, muſt be offended with ſuch invidious reflections on the ſacred writers. They, it ſeems, muſt be nothing leſs than guilty of miſrepreſentation, if their language expreſs not the ideas which our author entertains of Chriſt being Jehovah, the ſupreme God.

The inconſiſtency in his firſt inſtance, with which our author would charge St. Paul, if Chriſt be not the ſupreme God, has been before conſidered; for he frequently deals in repetitions: where it was ſeen, that [in perfect agreement] with truth and the apoſtle's own declarations, Chriſt might be ſaid to judge the world, and Almighty God alſo, and yet Chriſt all the while be nothing more than a creature, with high powers from God. But as our author, contrary to his uſual wont, enlarges upon the point, it will be fitting to give his words at length, p. 32. "St. Paul ſays, (Rom. xiv. 10.)

" *We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of* " CHRIST. That we shall all be judged, we al- " low. But how do you prove that *Christ* shall " be our judge? (*g*) *Because*, adds the apostle, " *it is written*, (Isa. xlv. 20.) *As I live, saith* THE " LORD, *every knee shall bow to* ME, *and every* " *tongue shall confess to* GOD. What sort of rea- " soning is this? How does this apply to Christ, " if Christ be not God? And how dare a man " (i. e. *the apostle*,) quote one of the most guarded " passages in the Old Testament for such a pur- " pose? The passage is this. Isaiah xlv. 20, &c. " *There is* NO GOD ELSE BESIDE ME. *A just God,* " *and a Saviour, there is* NONE BESIDE ME. *I* " *am God, and* THERE IS NONE ELSE. *Unto* ME " *every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.* " The apostle's reasoning is this. Jehovah says, " every knee shall bow to him. Jesus is Jehovah. " Therefore every knee shall bow to Jesus."

St. Paul's reasoning however is very different, and the conclusion the very reverse of what our author would draw from his words.

He is here exhorting the christians at Rome, to forbear censuring each other for their little differences in religious matters, and rather to turn their attention to their own christian conduct, that it might be such as it ought to be; because they would have to give account of themselves to Christ, their future judge.

Having said this, he throws in a citation from Isaiah: not to prove that Christ shall be our judge, from the Old Testament, as Mr. Robinson puts it: but to prove that all the world is and will be subject

(*g*) The apostle says—*For* it is written; not *Because*, as changed by our author.

to

to the dominion, controul and jurisdiction of Almighty God himself; and thereby to teach, not that Christ is Almighty God, but that it is from God that he receives his commission and powers: so that we may be said, ultimately to be judged by the Almighty, and to give account of ourselves to him.

If it be asked, how mankind can be judged at the last by Christ, and also by Almighty God? The same apostle furnishes a full solution of the difficulty. *God shall judge the secret things of men by Jesus Christ.* Rom. ii. 16. And; *God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.* Acts xvii. 31.

Our author proceeds with his other instances of *misrepresentation* of passages in the Old Testament, by the writers of the New Testament, if Christ be not Jehovah, the supreme God. "*John* "*the Baptist*—(Matth. iii. 13.) *is he, who was* "*spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying; Pre-*" *pare ye the way.* Isaiah saith, (xl. 3. 9, 10, 11.) "*Prepare the way of* THE LORD, *make straight a* "*highway for* OUR GOD. *Say unto the cities of* "*Judah, behold* YOUR GOD. *Behold the* LORD "GOD *will come, and feed his flock like a shepherd.* "But what has John the Baptist to do with all "this description, if Jesus Christ be only a *mes-*" *senger* of Jehovah, and not Jehovah himself: "for Isaiah saith, Prepare ye the way of JE-" HOVAH."

Answer. As our author very soon resumes this point, and expatiates in a very singular manner, and through many pages, upon the application of this and the like language to Christ, i. e. of *God himself*

himself being said to come, when Christ came to preach the gospel; there will then be an opportunity of shewing, with what just propriety and consistency, John the Baptist might be introduced speaking as he does here, though he looked upon Christ as nothing more than the most honoured messenger or servant of Jehovah, the supreme God.

His other instances, our author contents himself with barely citing, as saving him trouble, and answering his purpose. And it is to be feared, the lazineſs of many readers will but too readily incline them to be satisfied with his positive assertions, without farther inquiry. We must not, however, so pass him over. He begins:

" A prophet, speaking in the name of God, says; " *The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall look upon* ME, " *whom they pierced.* Zech. xii. 10. An evange- " list says; *One of the soldiers with a spear pierced* " *the side of Jesus*; *and the Scripture was fulfilled*, " *which saith, They shall look on* HIM, *whom they* " *pierced.*" John xix. 34. 36, 37.

The present hebrew reading of this text in Zechariah, in our printed bibles and in our english translation made from them, is, *they shall* (*b*) *look on* me, *whom they have* pierced.

But

(*b*) I give here in the margin the passage of the prophet at length, as it ought to be read.

Zech. xii. 10. &c. *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon* him *whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, &c.*

The best interpreters agree, that in this passage, we have a prediction of the murder of an illustrious person, one very dear to God, since God makes his cause his own: a general punishment

But it is plain, from its citation by the apoſtle, that he read it, *they ſhall look on* him, *whom they have pierced.*

And the learned have been very generally of opinion, that there had been a miſtake in the hebrew manuſcripts, from which the printed copies have been taken, and tranſlations made; as it might eaſily be done by a tranſcriber, through the omiſſion of a ſmall letter. And unprejudiced ſcholars have been the more inclined to believe, there had been this ſmall miſtake made, becauſe it is hardly poſſible to make ſenſe of the prophet's words, in their connexion with the whole paſſage, if you retain the reading, *they ſhall look on* ME.

Mr. Robinſon, not attending to this, nor perceiving the moſt *ſhocking incongruity of the eternal ſelf-exiſtent God being pierced through unto death*; for that is the ſignification of the term in the original; cites it notwithſtanding as ſpoken by the almighty Being of himſelf, and as a proof that Jeſus, whom the ſoldier pierced with a ſpear, was Jehovah, the moſt high God.

However, the late learned Dr. Kennicott, whoſe deſign and immenſe labours, ought ever to be mentioned with honour, in his moſt valuable edition of the Hebrew Bible; has found *they pierced* HIM, to be the reading of this paſſage in no leſs than forty Hebrew manuſcripts.

puniſhment alſo of the houſe of David and the inhabitants of Jeruſalem on account of this ſin, and as general a repentance and pardon, and reſtoration in conſequence of their repentance of that their ſin; and that it is impoſſible to find any thing in the jewiſh hiſtory that anſwers this prophecy, beſides the crucifixion of the Meſſiah; and that this application is ſtrengthened by the apoſtle's citation of it. The reader will ſoon perceive, how much the ſenſe and connection would be diſturbed, by reading ME *whom they have pierced,* inſtead of HIM.

His

His words relating to it, are these (*i*); " I have " but a few things to add concerning the other " passage in Joh. xix. 37. which is quoted by the " apostle; namely, the prophecy in Zechariah " xii. 10. *They shall look on* him, *whom they have* " *pierced:* where, although the printed Hebrew " Bible has it, *they shall look on* ME, (which de- " stroys the sense of the passage) yet the reading, " *they shall look on* HIM, is evidently preserved in " FORTY Hebrew manuscripts."

It is to be hoped therefore, that we shall now no more hear of this text being brought, as a proof of Christ's being Jehovah, the one supreme God; or of the supreme God being pierced to death.

" A prophet (continues Mr. Robinson) says; " *I saw the* LORD *sitting upon a throne, high and* " *lifted up, and his train filled the Temple. And* " *Seraphims cried one to another,* HOLY, HOLY, " HOLY, IS THE LORD OF HOSTS; *the whole earth* " *is full of* HIS *glory.* Isai. vi. 1, 2, 3. An evan- " gelist saith; *These things said Esaias, when he* " *saw* HIS *glory, and spake of* HIM; that is, of " Jesus. John xii. 39."

If these words of St. John are to be interpreted, as though the prophet himself spoke directly of Christ, the learned Dr. Clarke seems to have hit upon their true meaning. " When *Esaias,* says " he, ch. vi. 1. saw the glory of *God the Father,* " revealing to him the *coming of Christ,* he then " saw *the glory of him,* who was to come in *the* " *glory of his Father.* Matt. xvi. 27. *Esaias,*

(*i*) " Pauca dicenda restant de altero loco quem citavit " Johannes, nempe vaticinio, Zach. xii. 10. *Respicient ad* " eum, *quem transfixerunt*; ubi, quanquam impressius textus " legit אֵת *ad me,* (quod contextui repugnat) servatur tamen " lectio אֶל *ad eum* manifesto in codicibus Heb. QUADRA- " GINTA."—Kennicott. Dissertatio Generalis. p. 29.

" in

" in beholding *the glory of God*, and in receiving " from him a *revelation* of the *coming of Chriſt*, " *ſaw* (that is, *foreſaw*) *the glory of Chriſt*; juſt " as *Abraham*, John viii. 56. *ſaw* (that is *foreſaw*) " *his day, and was glad.*" Script. Doctr. of the Trinity, p. 109.

But the apoſtle's words may perhaps appear to ſome, more juſtly to be underſtood of God, and not of Chriſt; ſince God only is ſpoken of in the preceding verſe, to which they relate. And moreover, in the Coptic and latter Syriac verſions, and in one manuſcript, though this not of very early date, the reading is, *when he ſaw the glory* OF GOD, τȣ Θεȣ, *and ſpake of him:* which ſome may eſteem to be the true reading.

And the ground of the apoſtle's making this reflection in this place is; becauſe the glory of God, of which the prophet ſpeaks, is nothing elſe but the propagation of the goſpel over the whole earth. As though it had been; " *Theſe things* ſaid " Eſaias, when he had an immediate revelation " made to him concerning the goſpel."

For the whole of this ſixth chapter of Iſaiah, and the viſion with which it opens, relates to the goſpel-times, though nothing is therein expreſsly delivered concerning the perſon of Chriſt. And the hymn of adoration, offered up by the Seraphim, is a ſolemn declaration, " that not one peo- " ple only, as hitherto, but all mankind were to " be called to the knowlege of Jehovah, the one " true God, and to eternal life; to the ſole un- " rivalled honour and praiſe of that ſacred Being, " Creator of all things, and ſource of all happi- " neſs and perfection, who ſtands by himſelf alone, " unequalled in the univerſe he has made." For ſo is that repeated epithet *holy*, &c. and alternate ſong

ſong to be underſtood, when the ſeraphic choir chaunt one to another and ſay;

Holy, holy, holy, JEHOVAH, God of hoſts!
The whole earth is filled with his glory.

But Mr. Robinſon is not miſtaken by himſelf in his interpretation and application of this paſſage.

Biſhop Lowth's juſt and animated tranſlation of ſo noble and original a writer as Iſaiah, and his fine and uſeful illuſtration of the general plan of the prophet, will always place him in the foremoſt rank of interpreters of the ſacred volume. But one is grieved, that ſo great an author, of ſuch true ſenſe, ſhould one knows not how, in the preſent inſtance, give into the weakneſs of the narroweſt interpreters of the ſacred volume. For after having recited, and admirably explained this emblematic deſcription of Jehovah, ſitting on a lofty throne in the Temple, attended on and encircled by the brighteſt and higheſt of angelic powers, preſenting themſelves in the humbleſt poſtures, and covering their faces before him, in their worſhip of him; he coldly and degradingly remarks, in his note upon the place, "The Lord upon the "throne, according to St. John xii. 41. was "Chriſt." In too great haſte, to ſay the leaſt, overlooking the different and juſter interpretations, which the paſſage in the apoſtle admits, to be hereafter conſidered; and giving countenance to the ſelf-contradictory, impoſſible, polytheiſtic doctrine, that the holy Jeſus, the Son of Mary, is the moſt high God himſelf; is Jehovah, the God of the univerſe, adored by ſurrounding angels, who veil their faces before him, as unable to bear the ſplendor of his preſence.

But this is not all. In the ſame note, the Biſhop ſo far commits his good ſenſe, and conde-

ſcends to vulgar prejudices, as to quote with approbation this idle remark of an ancient Father, on the threefold repetition of the word *holy*, in the hymn of the Seraphim; "the deſign of which "is, ſaith he from Jerom on the place, ut myſte-"rium Trinitatis in una Divinitate demonſtrent;" viz. to demonſtrate the myſtery of the Trinity in one Divinity, or in the Divine Unity.

The famous Calvin, neither in fine parts or learning inferior to any one, and whoſe ſentiments are well known, ſhewed much more judgment in his reflexion on this comment of Jerom's (*k*). "The Fathers, ſays he, made uſe of this proof, "when they wanted to maintain againſt the Arians, "that there were three perſons in the one divine "eſſence. I am far from rejecting their opinion "upon this ſubject: but in diſputing with here-"tics, I ſhould chuſe to make uſe of ſtronger ar-"guments: for they are rendered only more ob-"ſtinate and glorying in their errors, when you "oppoſe them with proofs that are not plain and "convincing; as in the preſent caſe they may "eaſily and plauſibly alledge, that number three "is only uſed to denote perfection in the ſubject "it is applied to, as appears from many places of "Scripture."

It next follows; "A prophet ſays; *The* LORD "OF HOSTS HIMSELF *ſhall be for a ſtone of ſtum-*

(*k*) "Veteres hoc teſtimonio uſi ſunt, cum vellent, adverſus "Arianos, tres perſonas, in una Dei eſſentia, probare. "Quorum ego ſententiam non rejicio; quanquam, ſi mihi "res cum hereticis eſſet, mallem firmioribus teſtimoniis uti. "Nam redduntur pervicaciores, et ſecum ipſi plaudunt, "cum minus apertis teſtimoniis oppugnantur; ut hoc loco "facile eſſet et promptum ipſis excipere ternario numero "perfectionem notari, ut in aliis Scripturæ locis."

Calvin. apud Cleric. in loc.

"*bling.*

" *bling*. Iſai. viii. 13, 14. An apoſtle ſays; Chriſt " is that *ſtone of ſtumbling*, 1 Pet. ii. 8." And hence our author would have it concluded, that it was the ſentiment of the apoſtle, that Chriſt was the LORD OF HOSTS HIMSELF. What ground he has for it, will appear by conſidering both his citations. That from Iſaiah runs thus, in Bp. Lowth's valuable tranſlation:

Jehovah, God of hoſts, ſanctify ye Him;
And let Him be your fear, and Him be your dread.
And he ſhall be unto you a ſanctuary;
And a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence,
To the two houſes of Iſrael;
A trap, and a ſnare to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem.
And many among them ſhall ſtumble,
And ſhall fall, and be broken; &c.

If we have here a direct prophecy relating to the goſpel-times, which is the opinion of ſome good interpreters, and the inſpired writer, according to his frequent practice, after having ſpoken of the enemies of Judah, and their vain unſucceſsful attempts, ſtrikes into a deſcription of the future enemies of the Meſſiah, and of the cauſe and conſequences to themſelves, of their enmity and oppoſition to his goſpel: then, Jehovah, God of hoſts, may, by a very eaſy intelligible metaphor, be ſaid to be a *ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence; a ſtone*, on which the nation ſtumbled and fell; becauſe, that knowlege of himſelf, of his will, and merciful deſigns, which God beſtowed in ſo large a portion upon them, eſpecially by Jeſus Chriſt, through their neglect and abuſe of it, became the occaſion of their fall, and of their being rejected by him from being any longer his peculiarly favoured people.

The apoſtle Peter might alſo remark, in the ſame way, with a reference to this paſſage in Iſaiah; that Chriſt was *a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence:* becauſe his humble condition and appearance, ſo contrary to the vain expectations of his countrymen; and his doctrine, too pure and heavenly for their worldly minds, diſguſted, and indiſpoſed them towards him, to ſuch an extreme degree, as to put them upon violently taking away his life; which iſſued in their ruin and deſtruction, and that of their country.

But though God and his anointed prophet, Chriſt, were alike in this reſpect, does it follow that they were ſo in all other reſpects? Or does this particular reſemblance and agreement denominate Jeſus to be *Jehovah, God of hoſts*, the omnipotent, eternal God? It ſurely did not change his condition of a highly favoured creature, and inſtrument of the Supreme Being in forwarding the everlaſting happineſs of the human race.

If we enter into the more particular conſideration of this paſſage, which our author cites from the firſt epiſtle of Peter; we ſhall eaſily perceive, by attending to the way in which it is introduced, that though the apoſtle might have the words and ſentiment of Iſaiah in his mind, and allude to it, as is cuſtomary with the ſacred penmen; nothing could be more remote from his intention, than to ſignify by ſuch an alluſion, and adoption of the prophet's language, that Jeſus was *Jehovah, God of hoſts*, ſpoken of by the prophet. For having in his eye ſome paſſages of the Old Teſtament, in which the future Meſſiah is compared to a *corner-ſtone*, which is the ſupport of the building, he accordingly ſpeaks of him, as a *living* (i. e. a ſound and ſtrong) *ſtone, choſen of God, and precious*; and having applied the ſame figurative language

to

to chriſtians his followers, as *lively ſtones*, i. e, found members and ſupports of the ſpiritual building, the church: he proceeds, in the ſame way to declare, that this *ſtone*, Jeſus Chriſt, *unto them that believe would be precious; but unto them which be diſobedient, the ſtone which the builders diſallowed, the ſame is made the head of the corner, and a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence:* i. e. to men of wicked and worldly minds, all their oppoſition to Chriſt and his goſpel, would be vain, and recoil only on themſelves, to their own deſtruction. Thus all that can be collected from this paſſage is, that Chriſt was a choſen veſſel of God, and highly approved by him. And from theſe ſamples, the reader will be able to judge, whether there be any thing of more validity behind, which Mr. Robinſon may have to produce, as he would have it thought; and alſo whether there be any cauſe for the following reflection, very defective in the reſpect due to the ſacred writings, as well as too complimentary to his own judgment, which we have detected in ſo many inſtances to be haſty and ſuperficial. "It would "be endleſs, concludes he, to enumerate all the "paſſages, which are thus applied to Jeſus Chriſt. "Allow Jeſus Chriſt to be God, and all theſe ap"plications are proper: if we deny it, *the New* "*Teſtament we muſt own is one of the moſt unac*"*countable compoſitions in the world, calculated* "*to make eaſy things hard to be underſtood.*"

Our author next gives us, p. 34, 35, another dialogue of his own faſhion; feigned to have been held between John the Baptiſt and two of his diſciples, whom he names Reuben and Othniel; and he introduces them converſing together upon the ſubject of Chriſt, who had lately made his appearance among them, and aſſerting him to be Jehovah,

the moſt high God. Dialogues of the dead are certainly an ingenious and uſeful, as well as amuſing ſpecies of compoſition; of which the witty Lucian ſet the example among the ancients; which has been well followed by ſome fine writers among the French, and by our countrymen, Lord Lyttelton and Biſhop Hurd. I ſuppoſe it however to be a neceſſary rule of ſuch a way of writing, eſpecially when it is of the graver caſt, to adhere ſtrictly to the truth of character, and that the ſeveral ſpeakers ſhould not be mere images of wood and wire, to vent and patronize the particular ſentiments and opinions of the author, but ſuch as the perſons reſpectively are known or may juſtly be ſuppoſed to have entertained when exiſting in this world.

——— perſonæ convenientia cuique
Dicere.——— HORAT.

How far this precept has been obſerved, and whether in reality John the Baptiſt be not our author himſelf in diſguiſe, brought in by him to countenance his peculiar notions; and thus a prophet of God made reſponſible for his own very fallible comments on the Scriptures, and ſome palpable miſtakes; will be judged from what follows.

The ſubject of this ſuppoſed converſation takes its riſe from the meſſage, (*a*) placed in the margin, which Jeſus returned back to John, to ſatisfy him upon the buſineſs, for which he had ſent two of his diſciples to him. In which he bids the two diſciples to go and report to their maſter John,

(*a*) *John the Baptiſt hath ſent us unto thee, ſaying; Art thou he that ſhould come, or look we for another? Jeſus anſwering ſaid unto them; go, and ſhew John again thoſe things which ye do hear and ſee: The blind receive their ſight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, and the deaf hear,* &c. Matth. xi. 3, 4, 5.

the

the things which they had heard and ſeen; that the blind received their ſight, the lame walked, the deaf heard; and leaves it to him to draw the concluſion in anſwer to his inquiry: whether he who performed the very works, which the prophet foretold ſhould be performed by the Meſſiah, was not indeed the Meſſiah himſelf.

Mr. Robinſon immediately ſubjoins a large extract from Iſaiah xxxv. which I alſo put in the (*b*) margin; to which our Lord appears to allude, in his anſwer to John, as treating of himſelf and his miraculous works. But our author is not ſatisfied with the concluſion, which Jeſus would have the Baptiſt to draw from it, relating to himſelf; *viz.* that he was the Chriſt, the Meſſiah, the extraordinary prophet and meſſenger of the moſt high God: but would have it inferred, that he was nothing leſs than the moſt high God himſelf. "The "prophet, ſays he, p. 36. does not aſcribe theſe "events to man; he ſays, GOD *will come*; *behold*, "YOUR GOD *will come, and ſave you*; and he calls "the whole combination of events, a diſplay of the "GLORY OF JEHOVAH, *the excellency of* OUR GOD. "What has Jeſus of Nazareth to do with the in- "communicable name of the bleſſed God?"

Our author here charges the feigned perſonages in his dialogue with his own ignorance and preju-

(*b*) *The wilderneſs and the ſolitary place ſhall be glad for them, and the deſert ſhall rejoice and bloſſom as the roſe.—— Then ſhall they* SEE THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH, *and the excellency of* OUR GOD. *Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart; be ſtrong; fear not: behold,* YOUR GOD *will come with vengeance, even* GOD *with a recompence:* HE WILL COME *and ſave you. Then the eyes of the blind ſhall be opened, and the ears of the deaf ſhall be unſtopped. Then ſhall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb ſhall ſing: for in the wilderneſs ſhall waters break out, and ſtreams in the deſert.* Iſ. xxxv.

dices, by making them interpret the prophet, as if Jehovah their God in perſon was to come, when the goſpel was to be preached in future time, and as if Jeſus was God himſelf. But to ſay that God came, and did what his prophets and meſſengers performed in his name and by his command, was a phraſeology ſo well underſtood by the jewiſh nation in general, as to be quite familiar to them, when treating of the Almighty being, and his extraordinary condeſcenſions towards them. Thus, after our Lord had raiſed the widow's ſon to life, as they were carrying him out to be buried, the ſacred hiſtorian relates, Luke vii. 16; *And there came a fear on all; and they glorified God, ſaying, that a great prophet is riſen up among us; and that God hath viſited his people.* They did not intend by this language, that *God viſited* or *came to them himſelf in perſon*; ſuch an idea never entered into their thoughts: but as they well explain themſelves; *God viſited* them by raiſing up a great prophet Jeſus, and ſending him to them. So, that prophetic hymn of Zacharias, the Baptiſt's father, begins, Luke i. 68, 69. *Bleſſed be the* Lord *God of Iſrael; for* he hath viſited *and redeemed his people: and hath raiſed up an horn of ſalvation for us, in the houſe of his ſervant David!* Here again; how is God ſaid to have *viſited* his people? Not by any perſonal appearance himſelf among them; but as the holy man himſelf expounds the term, by raiſing up and ſending to them a Saviour and deliverer, of the family of David, the promiſed Meſſiah. And in the like eaſy well known dialect, when it was here foretold in Iſaiah, that the future Meſſiah, of the family of David, ſhould give ſight to the blind, feet to the lame, and do mighty miracles, to confirm his heavenly miſſion and doctrine: it might, in the prophetic language be aſſerted, and fitly expreſſed,

that

that thus GOD *himself, Jehovah,* THEIR GOD *should come among them:* because HE came by Jesus, who spoke and acted by an authority and extraordinary power immediately derived from him. And the jews also, who heard his doctrine and saw his miracles, might also be said to see THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH, *the excellency of* THEIR GOD; since *Jehovah,* their *God,* displayed his glorious perfections of wisdom, goodness and power by Christ, in their sight, and among them.

It being a matter of no small difficulty in our author's system, how Jesus Christ could possibly be Jehovah, the most high God, when the prophets, particularly Isaiah, stile him God's *servant:* in order to solve this problem, he brings in John the Baptist, like a modern metaphysician, arguing upon and recommending to his two disciples, the chimerical doctrine of two natures in Christ, the one human, the other divine, as the only way to reconcile a contradiction of his own making: thus forgetting all decorum of character, and not in the least attending to the strange anachronism he is guilty of; for he might with as much propriety have introduced this forerunner of Christ, arguing upon the Copernican system of the world, or Mr. Herschell's late discoveries. " The truth is, re-
" plies the Baptist in the dialogue, according to
" him; the Messiah is *one extraordinary person, in*
" *whom two natures, the nature of God, and the nature*
" *of man, are united. What is affirmed of them in*
" *one view, cannot be said of him in another.* The
" idea of the person of the Messiah is a key to
" the prophecies. Without using it, you will
" never be able to satisfy yourselves."

Another passage of Scripture, where the Baptist is made to give his sanction to our author's wrong and injudicious comments, is in Micah v. 2. *But thou,*

thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. The hebrew word (*c*), rendered to *come forth*, signifies, *to be born.* And christians are generally persuaded and agreed, on satisfactory grounds, as the Jews were before Christ, Matth. ii. 1—6; that there is contained in this passage a direct prophecy, that Bethlehem was to be the place of the nativity of the future Messiah. And after mentioning therein this circumstance of the place of his birth, the Almighty Being, who is himself the speaker, immediately added, (to signify that he whose birth was thus foretold, would be no ordinary person, and was intended for great things;) *whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

Those who do not attend to the prophetic language, concerning the Almighty Being, or where HE himself is introduced speaking; hastily conclude from such expressions as these, that they indicate the persons spoken of to have existed from all eternity; whereas they speak only of the councils and designs of God concerning them. Thus, in the example before us: He, who immediately before is foretold as to be born in some future period at Bethlehem, is nevertheless said to have been from ancient times, from the beginning; because he had been intended and appointed from the beginning by Almighty God, to sustain the character of the Messiah, the great prophet and messenger of God: in like manner as, in similar language, Christ is elsewhere stiled (*d*) *the lamb slain*

(*c*) See Bishop Chandler's defence of Christianity. Vol. I. p. 152.

(*d*) Revel. xiii. 8. See also Matth. xxv. 34. Eph. i. 4. 1 Peter i. 20.

from the foundation of the world; becauſe God had from the beginning of the world intended, that he ſhould promote the cauſe of righteouſneſs and the ſalvation of mankind by glorioufly ſuffering a violent death for thoſe great purpoſes.

(*e*) The moſt judicious commentators have ſeen, that this ſentence, *whoſe goings forth have been from of old, from everloſting*; implies a declaration on the part of Almighty God, that he, who had juſt been predicted by him, as to be born at Bethlehem, had before all time been deſtined for the great part which he was to act; the deſigns of God being all planned out, and known to him, long before they are put in execution. But then, theſe learned men, unhappily coming to the reading of this paſſage in the prophet, with a prepoſſeſſion that Chriſt was the ſupreme God, they were led to maintain that he whoſe birth was thus foretold, had nevertheleſs exiſted from all eternity: not feeling the contradiction which they fix upon the ſacred writings, in making them ſpeak of a perſon *to be born*, and therefore *never having had any exiſtence*, as *having been for ever*; and alſo, how utterly impoſſible it would be, that Jehovah, the eternal God, ſhould here ſpeak of another, who was eternal like himſelf, without making *two* eternal Beings, *two* Gods. This contradiction, our author, with many others, having fallen into, he has moreover no ſcruple of making John the Baptiſt anſwerable for it.

(*e*) "*Egreſſiones ejus ab antiquo.* i. e. Ante conditum mundum decretum fuit, ut hiſce diebus in mundum prodiret, qui ſemper fuit, et qui olim patribus fuit promiſſus." Munſter. So Calvin alſo is ſaid to have interpreted it; *whoſe goings forth* have been decreed *from the days of eternity*. Unitarian Tracts.

He

He next proceeds to make John the Baptiſt maintain, that Jeſus was the Jehovah, that was worſhiped by the Iſraelites. The argument however to prove it, is not his own; but he hath the merit of being the firſt, who ventured to pronounce it to have been the opinion of him, whom Chriſt declares (Matth. xi. 11.) to have been above the common rank of prophets. His poſitions, ſtript of the converſation-form, which is rather tedious and inſipid, are theſe:

Jehovah, the moſt high God, being a ſpirit, inviſible, could not appear to, or be ſeen by men.

A perſon did appear, taking upon him the name and character of Jehovah, and was worſhiped as Jehovah.

Jeſus, who was afterwards born at Bethlehem, was the Jehovah, who appeared to, and was worſhiped by the Iſraelites.

In reply to this, it is to be noted, that although God be an inviſible ſpirit; yet he may manifeſt himſelf, his extraordinary preſence, his will and commands, by outward ſymbols and tokens, by an audible voice, by a human, angelic, or any other particular figure or ſhape, without any degradation or incongruity; and thus *appear* to mankind. And therefore, in all thoſe places of ſcripture alleged by our author, it may very conſiſtently be ſhewn, that it was God himſelf who appeared, and not any other for him. And though this appearance was ſometimes made by borrowing a human form, it was at other times by a voice, by a flame of fire, or the like; which, in their turns, were all ſtiled, the *angel of the Lord*; as being manifeſtations of his extraordinary preſence: the phraſe, *angel of the Lord*, not being confined to ſignify an intelligent agent, but inanimate things; fire, a voice, and the like, when manifeſting the divine preſence,

being

being ſo ſtiled. This will be found to be the true ſolution of theſe divine appearances by thoſe who will take the pains to make the Scripture its own interpreter; and it is the ſentiment of learned jews and chriſtians, of the firſt rank for diſcernment and impartiality. Some of the early heathen fathers indeed, ignorant of the peculiar phraſeology of the Scriptures, without any grounds but thoſe alleged here by Mr. Robinſon, *viz.* of it being impoſſible for God, who was an inviſible Spirit, to appear himſelf; did on this account imagine, that it was Chriſt that appeared, having taken up wrong notions of him from their heathen philoſophy; yet did not ſuppoſe him to be Jehovah, God himſelf, as our author would make him, but, his repreſentative, the firſt being produced by him and the maker of all things under him. But that there is no foundation in the Scriptures for any ſuch concluſion, or to infer that any other being or perſon appeared and was worſhiped as Jehovah, but the ſingle perſon of the one omnipotent creator and Father of all, has been ſhewn by Lowman; and after him by Lindſey, in the Sequel to his Apology, who has conſidered the ſubject very fully. However, if the divine appearances had been all along in a human form, on which our author lays ſuch great ſtreſs; there would have been no good ground of forming the concluſion he does, (or rather of bringing in John the Baptiſt, whom he perſonates, thence concluding, for theſe are the words that he makes him utter in his ſuppoſed dialogue,) that "Jeſus, who was born at "Bethlehem, exiſted before his birth, appeared to "our fathers, and was worſhiped by them as Je-"hovah, the Lord their God." For the paſſage of the prophet, Micah v. 2. *whoſe goings forth have been from of old, from everlaſting*, from which he would

would deduce all this, has been ſhewn to be intirely miſtaken by him, and by others before him; and to have no reference to any pre exiſtent ſtate of Jeſus, but to the divine decrees and deſignation concerning him, before he had any exiſtence.

I ſhall add only one thing more, and then we ſhall have done with this curious dialogue of the dead, which has turned out ſo little to the credit of its inventor, in any way. And that is, I am ſorry to ſay, another inſtance of careleſſneſs and preſumption, in taking advantage of a very wrong tranſlation of a paſſage of the Old Teſtament in our engliſh bibles, which ſeems to make Chriſt equal to Almighty God, Jehovah's *fellow*, and aſcribing this interpretation to John the Baptiſt, as being that prophet's, and not his own. It is in Zech. xiii. 7. where we tranſlate: *Awake, o ſword, againſt my ſhepherd, and againſt* the man that is my fellow, *ſaith the* LORD *of hoſts:* but the true rendering is—*againſt the man that is near to me*, or *my favourite*. The Septuagint renders it: επ' ανδρα πολιτην μου, *againſt the man that is my citizen or countryman*. Aquila, επι συμφυλον μου, *againſt the man of the ſame tribe with me*. Symmachus, επ' ανδρα του λαου μου, *againſt the man of my people*. Theodotion, επ' ανδρα πλησιον αυτου, *againſt the man who is his neighbour*. Junius and Tremellius, Hebræa vox proximum aut amicum ſonat, &c. i. e. *the word in the original ſignifies a neighbour or friend.*

SECTION VIII.

Whether the Scriptures, which foretell the deſtruction of idolatry by the goſpel, have not been fulfilled, although Jeſus Chriſt be wrongly worſhiped as God.

MR. Robinſon's next propoſition, p. 44. is; that *if Jeſus Chriſt be not God*, the prophecies which foretold the coming of the Meſſiah, and the

the deſtruction of idolatry by his coming, have not been fulfilled: *for that chriſtians in general worſhip Jeſus: which is idolatry, if he be not God.*

Whether upon our author's definition of idolatry, the greater part of the chriſtian world have not been for many ages, and are now, idolaters, I ſhall not controvert, but ſhall leave to him to determine. But notwithſtanding the lamentable departure of chriſtians from the Scripture-rule in reſpect of the true object of worſhip, it will not be found ſo inconſiſtent as he imagines with thoſe prophecies which predict the downfall of idolatry, and that all nations ſhould be brought to the knowlege and worſhip of Jehovah, the one only true God, by the goſpel.

For however eager and precipitate we are wont to be, in our projects and expectations, to ſee things inſtantly executed, as our lives are but of a few days continuance; it is otherwiſe with that almighty eternal Being, who has an infinite variety of ends in view that we know not of, who brings about his purpoſes by a variety of means, and with whom no length of time makes any alteration. The ſame Scriptures foretell, that all mankind would be brought to the knowlege of the truth, and become virtuous and reformed in their lives by it: but we ſtill complain, and with too much reaſon, of the immoralities that prevail among the followers of Chriſt; and not more than one ſixth part of the world are ſuppoſed to profeſs faith in him.

The prophecies concerning the extinction of idolatry and the putting down the worſhip of any other perſon but Jehovah, the ſupreme Father of all, will be anſwered, if the effect has been in ſome degree produced; and if there be a tendency in the means appointed, to accompliſh it in the pro-

progreſſion of ages, ſtill more largely, and univerſally. Concerning this, it will not be difficult for any one to form a true judgment, who attends to the following facts;

1. Our Saviour always taught, that *the Father*, was *the only true God* (*f*), John xvii. 3; from whom he had his miſſion; and that HE was alſo *his God and Father* (*g*), John xx. 17; from whom he received his being, in common with his diſciples and the reſt of mankind.

He directed men to *worſhip the Father*, and never let fall the leaſt intimation, that himſelf or any other perſon whatſoever, was the object of worſhip; Luke xi. 1, 2. John iv. 21, 22, 23, 24: and ſo far from requiring men to worſhip himſelf, he was all his life long a devout worſhiper of the Father in private, Matth. xi. 25. John xi. 41, 42. Matth. xxvi. 29. 41; and alſo was a conſtant attendant on the temple, and ſynagogue-worſhip; where Jehovah alone, the God of Iſrael, was addreſſed and adored.

2. His apoſtles, after their divine Maſter's death, and removal out of this lower world, in their applications to men to become his diſciples, which were firſt made to their countrymen, inſtructed them; that Jeſus, though he was a man of no note among them, having paſſed the greateſt part of his life in the obſcure town of Nazareth, was nevertheleſs highly acceptable to God for his eminent virtues, and diſtinguiſhed by extraordinary gifts of a divine power conferred upon him;

(*f*) *This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jeſus, the Chriſt, whom thou haſt ſent.*

(*g*) *Go to my brethren,* (i. c. his diſciples) *and ſay unto them; I aſcend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.*

Acts

(*h*) Acts ii. 22: that though he died by violence and injuſtice in the cauſe of truth, God vindicated him by a ſpeedy reſtoration to life, and by raiſing him to great honour and dignity; ver. 23, &c. All the apoſtles, united in a ſolemn act of worſhip, ſpeak of their maſter Jeſus, as the (*i*) *ſervant* of the ſupreme Potentate, who made the world, &c, iv. 24: and Peter declares, that it was *the God of Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, the God of their fathers*, who had honoured this his faithful *ſervant*, by raiſing him to life. iii. 13. &c. The Roman officer, Cornelius, and his friends, had learned, probably from living among the Jews, the knowlege and worſhip of the one true God; ſo that Peter's preaching to them is not as to heathen idolaters, and very little different from his firſt ſermon to his countrymen, viz. to inform them of the commiſſion and extraordinary powers, as a divine Teacher, which Jeſus of Nazareth had received from God; who had put his laſt ſeal to the authority of this his choſen meſſenger, by reſtoring him to life, after he had been moſt unrighteouſly put to death; and honouring him with the appointment of being the future judge of mankind: x. 38. Paul exhorted the men of Lycaonia, to *turn from idols unto the* (*k*) *living God, who made heaven,*

(*h*) *Ye men of Iſrael, hear theſe words: Jeſus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, wonders and ſigns, which* GOD *did by him in the midſt of you, as ye yourſelves alſo know.*

(*i*) Such awful ſentiments did they entertain of the ſovereign unequalled glory and dignity of the Almighty Father, and the infinite diſtance betwixt HIM and their lord and maſter Jeſus.

(*k*) Jupiter, and the other falſe gods, whom the heathens worſhiped, had all been men, who had been deified after their deaths. The *living God*, is a name peculiar to Jehovah,

heaven, and earth, and the ſea, and all things that are therein. At Athens, Paul taught, *that God that made the world, and all things that are therein; ——had appointed a day, in the which* HE *would judge the world in righteouſneſs,* by that man *whom he had ordained: whereof he had given aſſurance to all men by having raiſed him from the dead.* xvii. 24. 31. When Chriſt appeared in a viſion to Paul, and gave him his commiſſion to awaken men out of darkneſs and ignorance, and bring them to virtue and the knowlege of the true God; he called himſelf, (*l*) Jeſus of Nazareth. Acts xxvi. 18. 15. xxii. 8.

Thus did Chriſt lay the ground-work, and his apoſtles after him built upon it, in preaching againſt the worſhip of idols, and teaching the nations in all countries throughout the known world, that there was but one God, the Father of all mankind, who was to be worſhiped. And the immediate ſucceſs was anſwerable to what might be expected from the extraordinary divine aſſiſtance that accompanied theſe apoſtolic teachers of the divine unity. Idolatry generally gave way. The heathen temples were deſerted; and in the

the one true God; from whom all beings, Chriſt and all mankind, receive their exiſtence, and on whom all depend for the duration of it.

(*l*) When this holy Saviour, even after his aſcenſion into heaven, and exaltation *at the right hand of the Father,* whatever be to be underſtood by it, ſtiles himſelf Jeſus of Nazareth; ſhould not his followers be careful and conſider well, what grounds they have to call him Jehovah, the ſupreme God? Is he likely to approve their paying him ſuch undue honours, which he was ſo very far from claiming, that he utterly diſclaimed every thing of the kind himſelf? And would he not have intimated a matter of ſuch importance to our apoſtle, at this or at ſome other ſeaſon, if it had been true: whereas, on the contrary, he tells him, that it was to God that men were to be turned, and not to himſelf.

courſe

courſe of a few ages, in chriſtian countries, the worſhip of their heathen gods was heard of no more.

This may ſatisfy us, that the predictions of the prophets were not void, concerning the ſucceſs of the goſpel in putting idolatry to flight.

But alas! although the worſhip of the heathen falſe gods, Jupiter, Juno, Mercury, &c. was in many parts aboliſhed, chriſtians made to themſelves new gods, ſimilar to them; and in other ways departed from the true worſhip of the Father.

There was a ſect of chriſtians, which aroſe in the days of the apoſtles, who are the chief ſubject of St. John's firſt and ſecond epiſtle; which appear plainly to have been compoſed by him to counteract their errors.

Through a falſe philoſophy, and a miſtaken, miſplaced regard for Chriſt, theſe perſons would not allow him to have been a mortal man, who had the infirmities of our nature, and was liable to ſufferings and death: but they maintained, that he was of a nature incapable of what was ſo degrading; and was all thoſe things, in appearance only, and not in reality.

The apoſtle's endeavours to check the growth of this ſect of chriſtians, ſeem to have been effectual. For we hear not much of them, after the time of the immediate ſucceſſors of the apoſtles, who make frequent mention of them. But the principles of that falſe philoſophy, by which they had been miſled, were too deeply rooted in the learned heathen converts and their ſucceſſors, who took the lead in the chriſtian church, to make them contented with ſuch a founder of their religion, who was only a human being; though of the ſublimeſt piety, the moſt tried integrity, and conſummate benevolence, the higheſt poſſible perfections of a creature. They

proceeded therefore by degrees to raiſe and aggrandize, as they thought, the bleſſed Jeſus, but in reality to obſcure and diminiſh his true character, till in the courſe of a few centuries, at the council of Nice, in the year 325, the fathers, as they are called, the learned heads of the chriſtian church, pronounced him by imperial ſynodical authority equal to the ſupreme Father, and anathematized all who would not ſubmit to their decree.

Of heathen origin, though from different cauſes, came the idolatrous worſhip of dead men and women into the chriſtian church, its moſt laſting diſgrace; which in proceſs of time ſpread itſelf univerſally, and is found to this day in the greek and roman churches, in every quarter of the globe. It firſt took its riſe from an exceſſive veneration of thoſe moſt excellent perſons, the martyrs, who courageouſly reſigned their lives in torments, rather than deny the truth of Chriſt, and worſhip the falſe gods of their heathen perſecutors.

To render honour to ſuch characters was natural; but their mode of doing it became a ſnare to them. They began with paying a particular regard to the birth-days of theſe holy men, or the anniverſaries of their martyrdom; and took pleaſure in ſhewing their reſpect for them by viſiting their ſepulcres. Their imaginations there ſoon caught the ſuperſtitious idea, that their prayers would be more acceptable to the Almighty, by being offered on ſuch holy ground, that had been watered with the blood of the pious ſufferers; and thence, by an eaſy tranſition, from praying *at* their tombs they ſoon grew to pray *to* thoſe who had been buried in them. Stated times of feaſting and rejoicing were appointed, to do honour to their memories; and this the more, when they obſerved how agreeable it was to their heathen neighbours, and

and a means of inducing them to become chriſtians, being ſo like their own heatheniſh practice.

Sir Iſaac Newton makes the following citation and remark on this ſubject (*m*). "*Gregory Nyſſen* "tells us, that after the perſecution of the empe- "ror *Decius*, *Gregory* Biſhop of *Neocæſarea* in "*Pontus*, *inſtituted among all people, as an addi-* "*tion or corollary of devotion towards God, that* "*feſtival days and aſſemblies ſhould be celebrated* "*to them who had contended for the faith*, that is, "to the *Martyrs*. And he adds this reaſon for "the inſtitution: *When he obſerved*, ſaith *Nyſſen*, "*that the ſimple and unſkilful multitude, by reaſon* "*of corporeal delights, remained in the error of* "*idols; that the principal thing might be corrected* "*among them, namely, that inſtead of their vain* "*worſhip they might turn their eyes upon God; he* "*permitted that at the memories of the holy mar-* "*tyrs, they might make merry and delight them-* "*ſelves, and be diſſolved into joy.* The heathens "were delighted with the feſtivals of their Gods, "and unwilling to part with thoſe delights; and "therefore *Gregory*, to facilitate their converſion, "inſtituted annual feſtivals to the Saints and Mar- "tyrs."

Had this excellent perſon, ſufficiently conſidered the character of Gregory, the learned and truly pious Biſhop of Neocæſarea, grave, ſober, ſedate and virtuous, a favourite pupil of Origen's, and converted from heatheniſm by him, he would have been far from fathering upon him ſuch unworthy methods of bringing men to embrace the goſpel. But he paid too much deference to Gregory of Nyſſa, an author who deals much in the marvel-

(*m*) Obſervations upon the prophecies of Daniel, &c. by Sir Iſaac Newton, p. 203, 204.

ous; and who, at the distance of an 100 years gives this account of his great uncle, and may justly be suspected rather to describe the corrupt practices of his own times than those of the Bishop of Neocæsarea. Nor is it likely that christians would have taken such liberties, and given this loose to their passions and to revelry at the tombs of their martyrs, or that the heathens would have been forward to join with them, and from such motives embrace christianity, when heavy persecutions hung over them, and often fell upon them for their religion. These are the fruits and consequences of ease and security; and belong rather to the middle of the fourth century, when christians in their turn enjoyed the protection of the state, and made but a very bad use of it, in this and many other ways.

Corruptions then in point of christian worship did not immediately take place; but came on by degrees. For the space of many years after the apostles, Christ was not taken into an equality with the supreme Father, and the same worship paid to him; nor was prayer offered to his mother Mary, and other dead persons, called Saints.

Mr. Robinson however maintains that it was otherwise with respect to the first of these, p. 46; "that the practice of the primitive christians was "to WORSHIP JESUS CHRIST;" and he brings some examples to prove it: which it will be proper to examine.

His first instance is taken from the famous letter of Pliny the younger, governor of Bithynia, to the emperor Trajan his master, to consult him about the methods he was to pursue with the christians, who were already numerous and increasing in that province. Speaking of the confessions which they had made to him concerning

ing their religion, he says; "*They affirmed, that the whole of their fault, or error, lay in this, that they were wont to meet together on a stated day before it was light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ* (*n*) *as a God, and to bind themselves by an oath, not to the commission of any wickedness, but not to be guilty of theft or robbery, or adultery, never to falsify their word, or to deny a pledge committed to them, when called upon to return it.*"

Inconsiderate persons may be imposed upon at first by this account: but a little reflection on the circumstances, and the person who gives it, will shew that nothing can be concluded from it. For able critics, of different opinions concerning Christ in this matter, have agreed in holding it a doubtful point, whether the words (*o*) *quasi deo, as a God*, used by Pliny, were not rather his own expressions, than those of the christians he had

(*n*) The learned Mr. Melmoth translates these words in this manner: *and addressed themselves in a form of prayer to Christ, as to some God.* "And I must acknowlege," says Dr. Lardner, (whose version is here followed) "that his translation appears to me as proper as my own. For *carmen*, or ὑμνος, does not always denote a metrical composition. Julian concludes his oration upon the mother of the Gods, with what he calls *a hymn to her honour*, which is a prayer in prose. And, unquestionably, Julian speaks properly. Therefore Pliny's carmen Christo quasi deo, may have been a prayer to God, in the name of Christ, a prayer upon christian principles, in which God was praised for all the blessings of the christian revelation." Jewish and Heathen Testimonies, Vol. ii. p. 36. So says that most fair and accurate of all writers. And I should suppose, that all unprejudiced judges will look upon this as a fine criticism and just interpretation.

(*o*) "Vocabula, *quasi deo*, qua vi prædita hic sint, determinare haud audeo. Incertum enim est, suis hoc verbis Plinius loquatur, an christianorum."

Mosheim apud Lardner, Ibid. p. 34.

examined. And being a bigotted heathen idolater, though a perſon of fine parts and accompliſhments, and finding that Jeſus, the founder of the chriſtian ſect, as his friend Tacitus the hiſtorian relates, was a Jew, who had been put to death lately in the reign of Tiberius; he would naturally conclude, that he had been deified by the Jews, as eminent men were deified among themſelves, and ſpeak of him as ſuch.

This interpretation of Pliny's language is rendered moſt probable, if not quite confirmed by this fact, namely; that we have elſewhere no account of worſhip paid to Jeſus Chriſt in theſe early times, Juſtin (*p*) Martyr ſays; "In all our oblations "we praiſe the Creator of all through his Son "Jeſus Chriſt, and the Holy Spirit." And "The "Preſident (of the chriſtian aſſembly) gives praiſe "and glory to the Father of all, in the name of "the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." And ſays Tertullian; "The God, whom we worſhip, is "the God who made this whole univerſe, and "every thing therein, by his powerful word." In another place; "We worſhip God through Chriſt. "Call him a man if you think fit. It is by him, "and through him, that we have been brought "to the knowlege, and the worſhip of God. And "the Jews themſelves were taught how to worſhip "God, by the man Moſes."

To give farther ſtrength to this argument, I ſhall ſubjoin the private prayers of two moſt diſtinguiſhed chriſtians in their dying hours; the one of them reckoned by many in the number of the apoſtles; the other, one who had lived and converſed with them.

(*p*) I quote here Dr. Lardner—Heathen and Jewiſh Teſtimonies, Vol. ii. p. 35, 36.

The

The firſt is taken from an account of the death of James the Juſt, (as he is called,) at Jeruſalem, ſuppoſed to have happened in the year 62. It is preſerved by Euſebius, in a fragment of the works of Hegeſippus, a Jew-chriſtian, who lived not long after the time of the apoſtles. Some have held the whole narrative to be apocryphal, from certain improbable ſtories mixed with it; and that this James the Juſt was ſome unknown perſon, and not James the Leſſer, as he is otherwiſe called, the brother of our Lord. But a good defence of the hiſtory in general, and of the perſon being James the apoſtle, and our Lord's kinſman, may be met with in Lardner's Supplement to his Credibility, &c. Vol. iii. p. 36—83; from whom I tranſcribe Hegeſippus's account, as taken from Euſebius's Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, Book ii. ch. 23.

"When the Jews, Scribes and Phariſees, and others, came to James, to deſire him to tell the people his opinion of Jeſus, they ſay to him: "For "we and all the people bear witneſs to you, that "you are juſt, and accept no man's perſon." Afterwards James ſays to them: "Why do you "aſk me concerning *Jeſus, the ſon of man? He "ſits in heaven, on the right-hand of the Great "Power, and will come in the clouds of heaven.* "Whereby many were fully perſuaded, and glo- "rified God for that teſtimony of James, ſaying, "*Hoſanna, to the Son of David.* His enemies "being exaſperated at this, when they had thrown "him down from the battlement of the Temple, "he not being quite dead, they began to caſt "ſtones upon him. But he kneeling down, ſaid; "*I beſeech thee, O Lord God, the Father, forgive "them: for they know not what they do.*"

The prayer is very ſhort; and ſome may be ready to think, it needed not ſo long a preface: but

but it is important. For it teaches not only what was the pious practice of an apoſtle, but alſo what was the opinion entertained of the great object of prayer and worſhip by Hegeſippus and the chriſtians of that early period: and the preceding part of the quotation ſhews, what ſentiments they then held of the perſon of Chriſt, under the ſanction of one of his apoſtles, and how very far they were from looking upon him as Jehovah, the ſupreme Being.

The other inſtance is extracted from a relation of the martyrdom of Polycarp, a holy and excellent perſon, who had been a diſciple of St. John, and had probably converſed with others of the apoſtles. Standing before the ſtake, at which he was going to be burned alive, and looking up to heaven, he ſaid; *O Lord God almighty, the Father of thy well-beloved, and bleſſed Son Jeſus Chriſt, by whom we have received the knowlege of thee; the God of Angels, and Powers, and of every creature, and of the whole race of righteous men who live in thy preſence: I bleſs thee, that thou haſt vouchſafed to bring me to this day, and to this hour; that I ſhould have a part in the number of thy Martyrs, in the cup of thy Chriſt, to a reſurrection of eternal life, both of ſoul and body, in the* (q) *purity of the holy ſpirit. Among whom may I be accepted this day before thee, as a rich and acceptable ſacri-*

(q) Or, *purified by the holy ſpirit.* The words in the original are, εν αφθαρσια πνευματος αγιου. Archbp. Wake and Mr. Whiſton render it, *in the incorruption of the holy ſpirit.* The apoſtle ſays, Eph. vi. 24. *Grace be with all that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* εν αφθαρσια, as here—*in incorruption*, in *ſincerity* as we tranſlate it, in *purity*: i. e. who adhere to his goſpel without judaical or heatheniſh mixtures, which diminiſh or defeat its good effects.

fice;

fice; as Thou, the true (r) God, with whom is no falſhood, haſt both before ordained, and manifeſted unto me, and alſo haſt now fulfilled it. For this, and for all things elſe, I praiſe thee, I bleſs thee, I glorify thee, through the eternal and heavenly Jeſus Chriſt, thy beloved Son (s). With whom, to thee, by the holy ſpirit, be glory, both now, and to ſucceeding ages. Amen.

In the Greek copy of this epiſtle in Cotelerius's edition, which is here made uſe of, it is put; *I glorify thee* with *the eternal*, &c. But in Euſebius, it is, I praiſe and glorify thee, *through* the eternal high-prieſt, Jeſus Chriſt, thy well-beloved Son. With whom the old verſion agrees, as Archbp. Wake points out, though he follows Cotelerius.

Our author's ſecond witneſs to the worſhip of Jeſus Chriſt is Mahomet. Concerning whom he obſerves, p. 47, that "in the light of infidels "and idolaters he conſiders chriſtians throughout "the Koran; and indeed, had not chriſtians wor-"ſhiped Chriſt, he could have had no ſhadow of "a pretence to reform their religion, and to bring "them back to the worſhip of one God."

But Mahomet, in the beginning of the ſeventh century, comes too late to bear teſtimony to the

(r) ο αληθινος θεος, *the true God.* Obſerve that this holy martyr, who lived and converſed with St. John, the favourite apoſtle, in his ſolemn prayer at going out of the world, declares, the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Lord God Almighty, to be *the true God.*

(s) If this laſt clauſe ſhould be thought genuine, Mr. Whiſton has given many reaſons, that it ſhould be as here read, *by*; and not *with*, the holy ſpirit, as Cotelerius has exhibited it. See Dr. Jortin's criticiſms on this account of Polycarp's death, and vindication of it: where he inſinuates his opinion, that the epiſtle which contains the account, may have paſſed through the hands of interpolators before it came into thoſe of Euſebius. Eccleſ. Hiſt. Vol. ii. p. 133.

early

early prevalence of the worſhip of Jeſus Chriſt. At the period when he began to arrogate to himſelf the prophetic character, the light had nearly forſaken the chriſtian world, with reſpect to the true object of worſhip. The followers of Chriſt had been for ſome ages quarrelling and deſtroying each other in their heats and diſputes, not concerning the ſupreme Father of all, to whom they paid little attention; but about the nature of Chriſt, and of the holy Spirit, and many other objects of worſhip, which they had invented. " (*t*) The notion of the " divinity of the virgin *Mary* was believed by " ſome even at the council of *Nice:* who ſaid " there were two gods beſides the Father, viz. " *Chriſt* and the virgin *Mary*, and were thence " named *Mariamites*. Others imagined her to be " exempt from humanity, and deified: which goes " but little beyond the popiſh ſuperſtition, in call- " ing her the *complement of the Trinity*, as if it were " imperfect without her. The fooliſh imagination " is juſtly condemned in the *Koran* as idolatrous, " and gave a handle to *Mahomet* to attack the " Trinity itſelf."

Without regarding the order of time, for reaſons beſt known to himſelf, our author reverts to Juſtin Martyr, as his third evidence of Chriſt being worſhiped by chriſtians in that early day, i. e. about the year 150. In proof of this he cites a paſſage from Juſtin, which I ſhall give, putting over againſt it a fuller and more exact tranſlation of it; and the original Greek in the margin. But it may be proper to mention, that immediately before, Juſtin advances his own ſuperſtitious notion concerning the heathen gods, and aſſerts; that it was by the ſuggeſtion of

(*t*) Sale's Koran, Prelim. Diſc. p. 35.

evil

evil demons, δαιμονες φαυλοι, whom the emperor and his ſubjects worſhiped, that they were prompted to perſecute the chriſtians; and remarks, that theſe evil demons ſometimes made their appearance, and committed adultery with women, and the unnatural crime with boys, alluding to the ſtory of Jupiter. After which he proceeds to the paſſage before us.

Mr. Robinſon.

(u) *The pagans tax us with atheiſm: and, if by atheiſm they mean a refuſal of worſhiping heathen deities, we own we are atheiſts: but, if by atheiſm they mean a refuſal of worſhiping any God, we diſown the charge. The true God, the Father .... the Son .... and the Spirit* WE WORSHIP, AND ADORE, &c.

Juſtin Martyr.

(u) *It is on this account,* becauſe we acknowlege not theſe falſe gods, *that we are called atheiſts. And we acknowlege the charge; that we are indeed atheiſts with reſpect to thoſe gods who are ſo eſteemed by you: but not with reſpect to* HIM, *who is* THE MOST TRUE GOD, *and Father of righteouſneſs, ſoberneſs and all other virtues, in whom is no ſtain of wickedneſs whatſoever. But we worſhip and adore* HIM; *as alſo his Son who came from him, and taught us theſe things; and the*

(u) Εφθειρδι και αθεοι κεκλημεθα. Και ομολογεμεν των τοιουτων νομιζομενων θεων αθεοι ειναι, αλλ' ουχι τω αληθεστατω, και πατρος δικαιοσυνης και σωφροσυνης, και των αλλων αρετων, ανεπιμικτω τε κακιας Θεω· αλλ' εκεινον τε και τον παρ' αυτου υιον ελθοντα και διδαξαντα ημας ταυτα, και τον των αλλων ετομενων και εξομοιεμενων αγαθων αγγελων στρατον, πνευμα τε το προφητικον, σεβομεθα, και προσκυνεμεν, λογω και αληθεια τιμωντες, και παντι βουλομενω μαθειν, ως εδιδαχθημεν, αφθονως παραδιδοντες. Juſtin. Martyr. Apol. i. p. 47. Hagæ Comitum. 1742.

hoſt

hoſt of other good angels, who follow and reſemble him; and alſo the prophetic Spirit: honouring them rationally and truly; ready moſt gladly and without any reſerve, to impart this knowlege to all who are deſirous of it.

There is ſomething here, in Mr. Robinſon's manner of citation, which it will be difficult for him to juſtify; eſpecially after inviting his readers to put the moſt implicit confidence in him, in a ſhort preface which he makes to this tranſlation from Juſtin in particular, two pages before. His words are; p. 46—" *In proof of this,* (i. e. of " Chriſt being worſhiped by the primitive chriſ- " tians) *I will adduce three unſuſpected witneſſes, who, " having no ſhare in our diſpute, can have no kind of " intereſt in deceiving us. The works of the two firſt,* " (i. e. of Pliny, and Mahomet, whoſe evidence has " been examined) *you have in Engliſh: and aſk any " one, who is capable of anſwering, whether* I impoſe " on you *in the laſt.*"

1. But how can our author acquit himſelf, or be acquitted of the blame of impoſing upon his readers, who cannot go to the original; when he diſguiſes the words of Juſtin, in ſuch a way as to give an appearance to the eye, as if that good man believed *the true God to be compoſed of three perſons, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit*; when Juſtin's own words, in the place, expreſsly declare one ſingle perſon (HIM) to be *the moſt true God* (αληθεστατῳ Θεῳ); and with the like preciſion, immediately after *diſtinguiſh the moſt true God from his Son that came from him,* and *from the prophetic Spirit.* This great fault ſtands the ſame, uncorrected in

the edition of his book in 1782, as in the firſt in 1776.

2. The indolent and unlearned reader is no leſs impoſed upon by Mr. Robinſon's contrivance, in admitting only ſome of Juſtin's words, and leaving out others, to make it ſeem, as if he and all other chriſtians at that time, were worſhipers of a Trinity of perſons, of Father, Son, and Spirit equally: whereas, if he had produced the whole paſſage, the direct contrary would have appeared.

For the reader, who attends to Juſtin's own words, as they are given above, will eaſily perceive, that he uſes the terms, (*w*) *worſhip* and *adore*, in the higheſt ſenſe, when applied to *the moſt true God and Father of righteouſneſs*; of that peculiar honour and worſhip, which are due only to HIM: but, in an inferior ſenſe, when applied to *the Son*, and the *prophetic Spirit*. Otherwiſe it would follow, that *the hoſt of good angels are to be worſhiped and adored*, as Gods; for they are put exactly in the ſame line and level, and are ſaid by Juſtin to be worſhiped and adored by him, as well as *the moſt true God*, and *the Son, and the prophetic Spirit*. It muſt give compunction to a good mind to have been the cauſe of miſleading ignorant perſons in matters of great moment, by a partial untrue repreſentation of facts.

Notwithſtanding Mr. Robinſon is thus unſucceſsful in his proofs of Chriſt being worſhiped by the primitive chriſtians; yet, that he was afterwards worſhiped as the ſupreme God, and is now by the greateſt part of chriſtians, is a fact that is

(*w*) This twofold ſenſe of the term worſhip, is very frequent in the Bible. So 1 Sam. xii. 18. we read, *And all the people greatly feared*, or *reverenced the* LORD *and Samuel*. So alſo 1 Chron. xxix. 20. *All the congregation bowed their heads, and worſhiped the* LORD *and the king*; i. e. David.

but

but too true; although we have ſhewn, in the foregoing part of this work, that there is no manner of foundation for it in the ſacred writings, by examining all the texts that he has heaped up together in its ſupport.

Our author however in this Section, does not allow ſuch worſhip to be wrong or idolatrous, for this ſingular reaſon, becauſe we are not ſo directly and expreſsly told and warned of it in the chriſtian ſcriptures, as he thinks we ought to have been. His words are; " If the apoſtles did not foreſee " this idolatrous worſhip of Jeſus Chriſt, God " gave them a leſs degree of the ſpirit than he " gave Moſes; and then what become of all thoſe " paſſages in both Teſtaments, which declare the " MOST plentiful effuſion to the apoſtles? If the " apoſtles did foreſee, and did not foretel this " dangerous departure from their doctrine, what " become of all their fine profeſſions, of *declaring* " *the* WHOLE COUNSEL *of God*, of *keeping back* " NOTHING *that might be profitable*, of *imparting* " *their* OWN SOULS, and ſo on? Are not all theſe " rather romantic?" p. 50.

To this it may be anſwered; that ſufficient information is given in the apoſtolic writings, to have kept chriſtians from the idolatrous worſhip of Chriſt as the ſupreme God, although Mr. Robinſon takes upon him to arraign the conduct of divine Providence for their not being more explicit in this reſpect. And there might be, and unqueſtionably there were reaſons ſatisfactory to the divine mind, for not predicting this idolatry by name as it were, though we are not made acquainted with them. If a humble conjecture may be allowed, where we know ſo little, and can aſſert nothing poſitively, I would ſay; That to have foretold in direct terms ſuch a total departure from the truth and from all probability;

bility; as that Jesus, the son of Mary, at first a poor helpless babe; increasing afterwards like others in wisdom with his years; working most probably for a long space of time at a mechanic trade; liable to all the infirmities of our nature, suffering hunger, pain, and at last death itself; one who constantly declared God to be his Father, i. e. that he received his being from him; who worshiped the Father continually as the only true God, and taught his followers so to worship him: that a human being so circumstanced, and with such dispositions, should also be truly and properly God, Jehovah, God of Israel, the eternal God, equal to the supreme Father, and worshiped equally with him: a mixture this, so heterogeneous, so out of nature, and beyond all bounds of credibility, to suppose that rational creatures could ever make, with so much evidence to the contrary before them as the testimony of the apostles afforded, that it is not to be wondered it was not made the subject of a particular revelation to them, as it might have given too great a shock to their minds. It was an extravagant idea, which christians in after-times did not arrive at all at once; but was fabricated gradually, as is well known to all that are conversant in ecclesiastical history, and the writings of the fathers. And ordinary christians now are not struck with the astonishing incredibility of such a doctrine, because it is instilled into them before they attain the use of reason, as a matter of divine authority, of which they are told, that they are not to take upon themselves to be the judges, and they are thus accustomed and familiarized to it: but it must for ever be a stumbling block to rational inquirers, and prevent many from receiving the gospel, so long as they believe this doctrine to make a part of it.

As our author maintains the worſhip of Jeſus Chriſt to be idolatry, if he be not the ſupreme God; and we have ſeen the inſufficiency of his allegations from Scripture to prove him ſuch; all that follows, "of this idolatry (*x*) being ſo wide ſpread, of ſo "long ſtanding, interwoven with civil conſtitu-"tions," &c. is beſide the purpoſe; unleſs it may excite all that read it, to flee from it. His long declamation afterwards, p. 51, 52. with which he finiſhes this ſection; eſpecially his invocation of the Almighty in ſo ſtrange a faſhion, (*in reality* to be a witneſs of his own miſtakes,) may work upon the weak and credulous, but muſt be offenſive to judicious readers, of proper ſerioufneſs and ſobriety of mind. I ſhould have paſſed it wholly unnoticed, had not I found two paſſages of the prophets greatly miſapplied by him, to prove Jeſus to be Jehovah, the moſt high God.

The firſt is, Jeremiah xxiii. 6. *This is his name whereby he ſhall be called, The* LORD (or Jehovah) *our righteouſneſs.* The words are generally allowed to be ſpoken of Chriſt: but they are here wrongly tranſlated in our engliſh Bible, as has been lately pointed out by a (*y*) learned and judicious writer. He renders them: *And this is the name by which* JEHOVAH *ſhall call him,* OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. To which he ſubjoins this valuable note. "Literally, "according to the hebrew idiom, the words run "thus; *And this is his name which* JEHOVAH

(*x*) Is not the worſhip of dead men and women, male and female-ſaints, as widely extended, of as long ſtanding, eſtabliſhed alſo by the civil power through the Greek and Roman churches, and held equally ſacred with the worſhip of Jeſus Chriſt as God? and yet this is not eſteemed by Proteſtants any good argument in favour of ſaint-worſhip.

(*y*) Jeremiah: a new tranſlation. By Benjamin Blayney, B. D. Oxford. 1784.

"SHALL

" SHALL CALL, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS; a phrase " exactly the same as, *And Jehovah shall call him* " *so*; which as I have before observed in note on " ch. xx. 3. implies that God would make him " such as he called him; that is, 'our righteous- " ness,' or the author and means of our salvation " and acceptance. So, by the same metonymy, " Christ is said to *have been made of God unto us* " *wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and* " *redemption*. 1 Cor. i. 30. "I doubt not," continues this candid author, " but some persons will " be offended with me, for depriving them by this " translation of a favourite argument for proving " the divinity of our Saviour from the Old Testa- " ment. But I cannot help it: I have done it " with no ill design, but purely because I think, " and am morally sure, that the text, as it stands, " will not properly admit of any other construction. " The lxx have so translated before me, in an age " when there could not possibly be any biass of " prejudice, either for or against the before- " mentioned doctrine; a doctrine which draws it's " *decisive* proofs from the New Testament only. " In the parallel passage, ch. xxxiii. 16. the ex- " pression is a little varied, but the sense, accord- " ing to a just and literal translation, is precisely " the same; *And this is He whom* JEHOVAH *shall* " *call*, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

The other passage, by which our author would prove Jesus to be the most high God, is in Isaiah xlii. 13. 16. 11, 12. and is thus exhibited by him. *The Lord* Jesus *came forth as a mighty man; he stirred up jealousy like a man of war; he cried; yea roared; he prevailed against his enemies. He brought the blind by a way that they knew not, he made darkness light before them.* Well may *the wilderness, the cities, the villages, the caves, give*

glory to Jehovah Jesus, *and declare his praise in the islands.*

The manner in which our author prints the text, shews the additions that he has taken upon him to make to it; how far justifiable therein, the reader will judge. But the success of the gospel in future times here predicted, and the thanks and praise due for it, he makes the prophet to ascribe, not to Jehovah, the single person of the one almighty Creator, whom alone Isaiah knew and acknowleged; but to another person, a new Jehovah, unknown, as far as appears, to the prophet and to many others, stiled by him, JEHOVAH-Jesus. This will appear the more extraordinary, if we look back to the beginning of the chapter, where there is a prediction concerning Christ, [uttered by Jehovah himself,] in which he is very particularly stiled the *servant* of Jehovah: which makes it utterly improbable, to say the least, that he should immediately after be addressed, as Jehovah himself. And though our author, as will be hereafter seen, can digest and maintain such evident contradictions, the words of the prophet should not be tampered with and altered to make *him* chargeable with them.

In our author's putting this addition to the words of Isaiah, out of a full conviction, I have no doubt, that he was so to be interpreted; we have an example of the method, by which as Sir Isaac Newton well conjectures, the spurious text of the three heavenly witnesses, 1 Joh. v. 7. *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit*, may have come into our Bibles. Some fanciful persons at first imagined that the apostle's three witnesses, *the spirit, the water, and the blood*, were an apt illustration of their notion of the Trinity, and might put it in the margin of their New Testament, as such; and afterwards, by mistake,

miſtake, or by the boldneſs of ſome tranſcriber, what was firſt a note, was inſerted into the text, and became reckoned a part of the apoſtle's own words and writing. "This myſtical interpretation," ſays that great author, "of the ſpirit, water, and "blood, to ſignify the Trinity, ſeems to me to "have given occaſion to ſomebody, either fraudu-"lently to inſert the teſtimony of 'the Three in "heaven,' in expreſs words into the text, for "proving the Trinity; or elſe to note it in the "margin of his book by way of interpretation. "Whence it might afterwards creep into the text "in tranſcribing(z)."

SECTION IX.

Whether, if Jeſus Chriſt be not the ſupreme God, Mahomet has written more clearly on the nature of Jeſus Chriſt, than the apoſtles have; and whether Mahomet was right in his doctrine of the Unity of God?

MR. Robinſon's next argument and diviſion of his work, ſtands thus: "*If Jeſus Chriſt* "*be not God, you will be obliged to allow, that* "*Mahomet has written more clearly on the nature* "*of Chriſt, than the apoſtles have; and that the* "*Turks, who reject the goſpel, have clearer notions* "*of the nature of Jeſus Chriſt, than Chriſtians have,* "*who receive and ſtudy it.*" p. 53.

It is no new thing for writers, who apply to the paſſions more than the underſtandings of their readers, to inſinuate that the religion of thoſe chriſtians who hold the proper humanity of Chriſt,

(z) Two Letters of Sir Iſaac Newton to Mr. Le Clerc, London, 1754. p. 17, 18.

is little better than Mahometiſm; becauſe its founder agrees with them in part that Chriſt was a prophet of God, and in maintaining, at the ſame time, that he was only the ſon of Mary, and nothing antecedent to that, any more than other men. This method our author purſues here. But he would have ſtated the matter more agreeably to the truth, if his poſition had been, that Mahomet *had ſpoken more juſtly of the nature of Jeſus Chriſt than himſelf, and the bulk of chriſtians*; and this, becauſe he therein agrees with the apoſtles, who uniformly deſcribe their maſter (*z*) as a human being only: which is alſo the conſtant language of Chriſt concerning himſelf.

Indeed in one very material reſpect Mahomet differs from the apoſtles, in denying Chriſt to have been crucified, and ſo far joining in the opinion of thoſe firſt erroneous chriſtians, againſt whom principally, as we have often remarked, St. John wrote his two firſt epiſtles; (*a*) who denied Chriſt to have *come in fleſh*, to have been mortal, liable to ſufferings and death: but that all this was mere

(*z*) For this, ſee the Unitarian Tracts, publiſhed at the cloſe of the laſt century; *Lardner* on the Logos; *Cardale*'s True doctrine of the New Teſtament concerning Jeſus Chriſt, *Prieſtley*'s works, *Lindſey*'s Sequel to his Apology, and Hiſtory of Unitarian doctrine and worſhip; with many leſſer tracts in our times.

(*a*) After having blamed ſome who "had ſpoken againſt "MARY a grievous calumny;" Mahomet proceeds to blame them in that they have ſaid; "Verily we have ſlain CHRIST "JESUS the ſon of MARY, the apoſtle of GOD; yet they "ſlew him not, ſays he, neither crucified him, but he was repre-"ſented by one in his likeneſs." Sale's Koran, p. 79. They were probably unbelieving Jews, who thus boaſted, that they had ſlain Jeſus Chriſt, and put an utter end to him; and therefore that in vain did men believe in him. See Lardner's Letter on the *Logos*, p. 9. See alſo Ignatius, and Irenæus's works throughout.

appearance,

appearance, and no reality: and as thoſe perſons probably took up ſuch a miſtaken doctrine to do honour to him; this candour bids us to own, might be Mahomet's motive for embracing it.

Mr. Robinſon will be found far from being happy and well grounded in all the inſtances he produces of diſagreement between Mahomet and the inſpired writers, with reſpect to the nature and perſon of Jeſus Chriſt; which we are to examine.

But to place this important point in its true light, I would premiſe; that the ſuperiority of the goſpel to the Koran, of Chriſt to Mahomet, lieth not in the opinion entertained concerning the nature of Chriſt. But herein conſiſts their everlaſting difference, and the divine excellency of the one above the other;

The pretenſions of Mahomet to an authority from God, were enthuſiaſtic and feigned: thoſe of Jeſus real, being confirmed by numerous miracles. Never in any one action of his public life that is recorded, and from this we may form a juſt idea of its more private ſcenes, do we ſee Jeſus acting out of a view to his own eaſe, ſelf-gratification, or honour among men, but purely for their good, and to promote their virtue and eternal happineſs. The aim of the Arabian falſe prophet, after he had ſucceeded ſo far as to have his miſſion owned, was too often directed to ſerve the private ends of ambition, and of impure, extravagant, ſenſual deſires.

Jeſus taught and injoined his followers, by love and kindneſs, and perſuaſive argument to win men over to his religion; and whilſt theſe methods alone were purſued, it glorioufly prevailed: Mahomet ſucceeded by carrying fire, and ſlaughter and deſolation, where any would not ſubmit to his law; and

while *he* locks up the human mind in darkneſs, and forbids inquiry, Jeſus invites it.

Mahomet ordained the gentler part of our ſpecies, and the moſt uſeful, where they fulfil their proper duties; to be ſlaves to the luſts, caprice, and tyranny of the men: but Jeſus ordains one man to be the huſband of one woman; and though in all ſocieties there muſt be ſome head to govern, he preſcribes the law of kindneſs and benevolence, which equallizes all.

Jeſus, himſelf the image and pattern of the moſt perfect purity, propoſes to his diſciples the happineſs of virtue for their reward in the future world, *where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage:* the laſcivious Mahomet provides beauteous damſels for his followers, with every thing enchanting to the imagination, and that can miniſter to ſenſual delight.

Mr. Robinſon thus lays down what appears to him the contrariety betwixt the New Teſtament and the Koran, concerning the nature of Chriſt.

Inſpired Writers.	Mahomet.
1. *The Word was* GOD. John i. 1.	1. They are INFIDELS who ſay, God is Chriſt. Sale's Koran. ch. v.
2. *Jeſus is* THE BRIGHTNESS OF GOD'S GLORY, *and* THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON. Heb. i. 3.	2. Chriſt the ſon of Mary, is no more than an APOSTLE. ch. v.
3. *He ſhall be called the* SON *of God.* Luke i. 35.	3. Chriſtians ſay, Chriſt is the SON of GOD. How are they infatuated! Far be it from God, that he ſhould have a SON. ch. iv.

4. *Jeſus*

4. *Jesus Christ is* LORD OF ALL. Acts x. 36.

4. *Jesus is no other than a* SERVANT. ch. xliii.

The whole of the passage in the Koran, from which our author makes his two first citations, is curious, and worthy to be produced at length.

" They are surely infidels, who say, Verily, " GOD is CHRIST the son of MARY; since CHRIST " said, o children of ISRAEL, serve GOD, my " LORD (*b*) and your LORD; whoever shall give *a* " *companion unto* GOD, GOD shall exclude him " from paradise, and his habitation shall be hell- " fire, and the ungodly shall have none to help " them. They are certainly infidels, who say, " GOD *is the third of three: for there is no* GOD " *besides* ONE *God.*——Will not they therefore be " turned to GOD, and ask pardon of him? since " GOD is gracious and merciful. CHRIST, the " son of MARY, is no more than an apostle; " other apostles have preceded him; and (*c*) his " mother was a woman of veracity: they (*d*) both " did eat food." Sale's Koran, p. 92, 93.

1. In

(*b*) Mahomet continually borrows from and alludes to the hebrew and christian scriptures. Here he had perhaps in his eye, our Lord's words to Mary Magdalen, soon after he was raised from the dead; *go to my brethren*, (his apostles) *and say unto them, I am soon to ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God, and to your God.* John xx. 19.

(*c*) *His mother was a woman of veracity*] " Never pretend- " ing to partake of the divine nature, to be the mother of " *God.*" *Sale.*

(*d*) They both did eat food.] " *Being obliged to support* " *their lives by the same means, and being subject to the same* " *necessities and infirmities as the rest of mankind*; *and there-* " *fore no Gods.*" This is also a remark of Mr. Sale's, the editor of the Koran; and is one among many circum- stances, which justified Mahomet in thinking Christ to be a human

1. In the firſt inſtance; if, inſtead of calling them *infidels*, Mahomet had alleged, that they who ſay, that GOD is CHRIST, the ſon of MARY, are miſtaken chriſtians, he would not have ſaid amiſs: for men may err in this important point as well as in others, and yet be true believers and acceptable to God, if they act the ſincere part, and as far as their light goes.

But I apprehend, that if Mr. Robinſon himſelf ſhould abruptly put the queſtion to any one, even the moſt orthodox; *Is* GOD *Chriſt, the ſon* OF MARY? they would heſitate, and not immediately anſwer him in the affirmative. Nay, I much queſtion, whether any one can bring himſelf really to think, that GOD is CHRIST, *the ſon of* MARY, as Mahomet puts it. So far is he from being in the wrong in this reſpect.

The text which our author oppoſes to Mahomet, to prove Chriſt to be God, John i. 1. *The word was* GOD; has been ſhewn to prove no ſuch thing. For it is not Chriſt who is the *word* there ſpoken of, (ſee p. 10.) but God himſelf; as the apoſtle expreſsly declares in the ſame verſe, *the word was God*, or GOD *was the word*. Should any one think, that it muſt be of ſome other perſon beſides God, that the apoſtle here ſpeaks, of becauſe he

human being, and not God; and the conſideration of ſuch things, joined to the conſtant tenour of the Scripture-declarations, muſt in time open the eyes of all, to diſtinguiſh between the all-perfect, all-ſufficient, eternal, unchangeable God, the benevolent author and parent of all, and his well beloved Son and ſervant Jeſus; who was once, whilſt he was as we are now, ſubject to ſufferings and death; but is now, for his perfect obedience, raiſed to an immortal life, and crowned with glory, in being the inſtrument of bringing the whole human race to ſhare with him in ſo aſtoniſhing a favour and felicity.

ſays; *the word was* with GOD, and repeats it again, ver. 2, *the ſame was in the beginning* with GOD; let them reflect, that the ſame language is uſed concerning *Wiſdom*, Prov. viii. 22, 23. 30. *The* LORD *poſſeſſed me in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old. I was ſet up from everlaſting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.— Then was I by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him. Wiſdom*, according to Solomon, is not another divine perſon, another God, another Jehovah; nor is the *word*, or *wiſdom* here introduced by the apoſtle: but in both places, according to the lofty eaſtern prophetic ſtile, it is God himſelf who is intended, characteriſed by his wiſdom; which is himſelf. The ſame ſtile of ſpeech is common with us, in poetry, or any immediate addreſſes to the Almighty. Thus we ſay; *Aſſiſt me, o thou gracious Power, that gaveſt me my being! Lead me, o thou Wiſdom divine, wherever thou pleaſeſt!* invoking GOD himſelf, by two of his attributes.

2. With reſpect to Mr. Robinſon's ſecond citation from the Koran, there would have been nothing to be blamed in it, if Mahomet had denominated Chriſt, *an apoſtle* of God. For ſo Chriſt calls himſelf, every time that he ſays; that he was *ſent* from the Father, or that the Father *ſent* him: for being *ſent* is being an apoſtle; the ſame word, or one from the ſame root, being uſed in the original. St. Paul, Heb. iii. 1. expreſsly ſtiles *Jeſus Chriſt, the apoſtle of our profeſſion.* But it was very wrong, and unjuſtifiable to ſay, that Chriſt was *nothing more than an apoſtle.* For he is exalted to be the Lord of chriſtians, and the final judge of the world. The crafty Mahomet however, was too guarded, to allow any ſuch extra-

ordinary

ordinary powers to Chriſt, as an apoſtle of God; leſt it ſhould diminiſh and counteract his own pretended ſuperior apoſtleſhip.

What our author cites from St. Paul, couched in ſuch magnificent figurative language; that Chriſt was *the brightneſs of* (or a bright ray from) *God's glory* (or power), *and the expreſs image* (print or character) *of his perſon*; beſpeaks him indeed to be far above what Mahomet would confeſs him to be: but does at the ſame time indicate, that he is what he is, and that all he poſſeſſes is from God; and alſo that he cannot poſſibly be God, the almighty, ſupreme Being. For however dignified by it, he is here mentioned but as a ray proceeding from that glory, which is infinite in the one ſupreme author and ſource of all power. And farther, as a print or image of a thing, cannot be the thing itſelf of which it is an image: in like manner Chriſt cannot be God; and if not God, he muſt be his creature; for whatever is not God, is ſuch: his creature, beloved by him, and reſembling him in his imitable perfections.

3. In the next inſtance, Mahomet is highly to be blamed for denying to Chriſt the title of *Son of God.* And as he was well acquainted with the Scriptures of the New Teſtament, where this title is continually given to our Lord, it may be apprehended, that he was induced to deny it him out of artifice, as thinking that for Chriſt to be called *the Son of God,* by way of honour and diſtinction, would give too much ſplendor to his character, and tend to eclipſe his own. It is poſſible, indeed, that he might be unwilling to admit it into the Koran, leſt he ſhould thereby give countenance to the groſs ideas concerning the Deity, which the antient natives of Arabia had adopted, who

ſpoke

ſpoke of God (*e*) as having *female iſſue, daughters that were angels.*

4. In the laſt inſtance, as in the ſecond, we cannot help aſcribing it to politic contrivance, to depreciate our Saviour's character, that this pretended prophet ſtiles him *no other than a ſervant.* Our author very properly confronts and confutes the diſparaging inſinuation, by citing Acts x. 36. *Jeſus Chriſt is Lord of all.* But although Chriſt is to be ever honoured with this dignified name and title, with reſpect to his followers, and to mankind; and he himſelf knew how to aſſert it (John xiii. 13.) on proper occaſions: Yet it muſt always be remembered, that with reſpect to almighty God, he invariably acknowleged himſelf to be his ſervant, *ſent* by him. God alſo ſpeaks of him, as one who was to be his *choſen* and *beloved ſervant*; before he was born. Iſaiah xlii. 1. Matth. xii. 17, 18. His apoſtles, as before noted, ſo ſtile him, Acts iv. 25. 27. 30; where in our engliſh tranſlation, *ſervant* ſhould be put inſtead of *child.* And though he is here called, *Lord of all:* this is not to be taken, as ſome have conſtrued it; that he is *Lord of all,* in an abſolute ſenſe, as God himſelf; but ſuch a Lord, as God hath conſtituted him: and the ſenſe and connection of the ſentence, being part of Peter's diſcourſe to Cornelius and other heathens, leads us to conſider it as

(*e*) Koran, p. 109. 218. 397.

Chapter cxii.

" Intitled, The Declaration of GOD's Unity.

" In the name of the moſt merciful GOD,

" Say GOD is one GOD; the eternal GOD: *he begetteth* " *not, neither is he begotten:* and there is not any one " like unto him." Mr. *Sale* obſerves, in a note, that this chapter is held in particular veneration by the Mahometans, and declared, by a tradition of their prophet, to be equal in value to a third part of the whole Koran. Ibid. p. 507.

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ſetting forth Jeſus Chriſt, as the Lord of all mankind, Jews and heathens, who were thenceforth to be united together under him.

It ſoon after follows; "If the generality of "chriſtians believe the divinity of a mere man, "they believe a lie, and *the ſpirit of truth, whom* "*the world cannot receive,* hath forſaken the chriſ- "tian church, and dwells in the moſques of a vile "impoſtor."

Although I am perſuaded myſelf, and think I have clearly proved in the ſeries of this examination, that thoſe who hold Jeſus Chriſt to be Jehovah, the ſupreme God, do widely err from the truth, I ſhould blame myſelf for ſaying, they *believe a lie*; for the uſe of this phraſe by the apoſtle, 2 Theſſ. ii. 11. does not countenance its application in ſuch a way, by our author or myſelf; and though it be in itſelf a moſt prodigious defection from the doctrine of the Scriptures concerning Chriſt, they who hold it, are convinced that they have ſufficient ground of evidence for it. Nor has *the ſpirit of truth* WHOLLY forſaken the chriſtian church, though it has in *this one* reſpect, for many ages, in its profeſſing to acknowlege Jeſus to be the moſt high God, and worſhiping him. Our Lord's promiſe to his diſciples, of *the ſpirit of truth abiding with them for ever*, was confined to them in their apoſtolic office, and therefore not inconſiſtent with or contradicted by his followers afterwards falling into the greateſt errors. *The ſpirit of truth*, ſince the apoſtles quitted the ſtage of this world, has reſided only in the holy Scriptures; and there it is that we are to ſearch for its dictates and deciſions, and not in the creeds and confeſſions of different churches or ſects of chriſtians, or in the concluſions of men, however pious and learned. The honeſt concluſions, which each of

of us form for ourſelves, from what we know of thoſe Scriptures, are what we muſt depend upon; and no miſtakes which we may thus fall into, will affect our final acceptance with God.

Impoſtor as Mahomet was, and is juſtly ſtiled; he ſeems not to have been void of ſome ſerious (*f*) good

(*f*) "It was at this time that he formed the ſcheme of "eſtabliſhing a new religion, or, as he expreſſed it, of re-"planting the only true and antient one, profeſſed by Adam, "Noah, Abraham, Moſes, Jeſus, and all the prophets, by "deſtroying the groſs idolatry into which the generality of "his countrymen had fallen, and weeding out the corrup-"tions and ſuperſtitions, which the latter Jews and chriſ-"tians had, as he thought, introduced into their religion, "and reducing it to its original purity, which conſiſted "*chiefly* in the *worſhip of one only* GOD.

"Whether this was the effect of enthuſiaſm, or only a "deſign to raiſe himſelf to the ſupreme government of his "country, I will not pretend to determine. The latter is "the general opinion of *chriſtian* writers, who agree that "ambition, and the deſire of ſatisfying his ſenſuality, were "the motives of his undertaking. It may be ſo: yet his "firſt views perhaps were not ſo intereſted. His original "deſign of bringing the pagan *Arabs* to the knowlege of "the true GOD, was certainly noble, and highly to be com-"mended. For I cannot poſſibly ſubſcribe to the aſſertion "of a late learned writer, (Dr. *Prideaux*, Life of Mahomet, "p. 76.) that he made that nation exchange their idolatry, "for another religion as bad. Mahomet was, no doubt, "fully ſatisfied in his conſcience of the truth of his grand "point, *the unity of* GOD, which was what he chiefly at-"tended to; all his other doctrines and inſtitutions being "rather accidental, and unavoidable, than premeditated "and deſigned."

"Since then Mahomet was certainly himſelf perſuaded "of his grand article of faith, which in his opinion, was "violated by all the reſt of the world; not only by the ido-"laters, but by the *chriſtians*, as well thoſe who rightly wor-"ſhiped *Jeſus* as GOD, as thoſe who ſuperſtitiouſly adored "the virgin *Mary*, ſaints, and images, and alſo by the Jews, "who are accuſed in the Koran of taking *Ezra* for the ſon "of GOD: it is eaſy to conceive, he might think it a meri-"torious

good principle at his firſt ſetting out: for which I would refer to a very capable judge, whoſe words I put in the margin.

For his crimes, which he fell into afterwards, he muſt anſwer at that tribunal, where we muſt all likewiſe ſtand, and be judged. This however is certain, that in the midſt of ſuch things as ſhock our minds; *viz.* his pretended communications with the Deity, and continual feigned revelations from him, his violence and injuſtice towards all that would not receive his doctrine, and the like; at leaving the world, he was perfectly (*g*) calm, and ſatisfied with his future proſpects; without any compunction for the part he had acted, yet not deſtitute of a juſt humility and ſenſe of his many defects; imagining perhaps, as has not been unuſual with other enthuſiaſts, and impoſing upon him-

" torious work to reſcue the world from ſuch ignorance and " ſuperſtition; and by degrees, with the help of a warm " imagination, which an *Arab* ſeldom wants, to ſuppoſe " himſelf deſtined by Providence for effecting that great re- " formation. And this fancy of his might take ſtill deeper " root in his mind, during the ſolitude he thereupon affected, " uſually retiring for a month in the year to a cave in " mount *Hara* near *Mecca*." Sale's Koran, Prelim. Diſc. p. 38, 39.

A late writer obſerves of Mahomet, with candor, and his uſual good ſenſe: " Nor is it eaſy to conceive, that he could " ever have ſupported the ſevere character of the great re- " former of mankind, whoſe morals were not ſpecious at " leaſt, according to thoſe ideas of morality, which pre- " vailed among the people to whom his pretenſions were im- " mediately propoſed."——White of Oxford's Bampton-Sermons, p. 158.

(*g*) " In one of the laſt revelations, pretended to be given " to him, and ſaid to be ſent to warn him to prepare for " death; he is exhorted to praiſe God, and aſk him for- " giveneſs: and it was remarked that after that, he was " more frequent in thoſe devout exerciſes." Id. Ibid. p. 506.

ſelf

ſelf therewith, that his moſt important object of reviving the knowlege and worſhip of the one true God, to which he had perſuaded himſelf that he had a divine call, would ſanctify whatever means he might uſe to promote it.

The ſucceſs which it pleaſed the divine providence to give to this falſe prophet and his religion (*h*), is one of thoſe events which fills us with awe and aſtoniſhment. In the courſe of a few centuries, it had eſtabliſhed itſelf, and well nigh extinguiſhed chriſtianity, by deſtroying or converting its profeſſors, in thoſe once flouriſhing churches of Aſia and Africa, many of which were planted by the apoſtles; and ſpread itſelf to the extremities of India. It has now ſubſiſted for near 1200 years, and though without any great acceſſion of late, yet without any diminution, and its profeſſors are believed to be more in number than chriſtians.

We cannot take upon us to fathom the reaſons of the divine moral adminiſtration, in giving greater light and knowlege of the truth to ſome

(*h*) " Mahomet aroſe to that heighth, as to make one of " the greateſt *Revolutions* that ever happened in the world; " which immediately gave birth to an empire, that in 80 " years time extended its dominion over more kingdoms and " countries, than ever the *Roman* could in 800. And al- " though it continued in its ſtrength not much above 300 " years, yet out of its aſhes have ſprung up many other " *kingdoms* and *empires*, of which there are three at this day, " the largeſt and moſt potent upon the face of the earth; " I mean the empire of *Turkey*, the empire of *Perſia*, and " the empire of the *Mogul* in *India*: which God hath per- " mitted, of his all-wiſe providence, ſtill to continue for " a ſcourge unto us *chriſtians*; who having received ſo holy " and ſo excellent a *religion*, through his mercy to us in " Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, will not yet conform ourſelves to " live worthy of it." Prideaux—Life of Mahomet, p. 79. firſt printed 1697.

nations, and withdrawing it from others; unleſs where our Maker has condeſcended to diſcover them to us.

In the preſent caſe, that judicious and truly learned perſon, Mr. Mede, has been thought by many to have fully evinced, (*i*) that in *the trumpet of the fifth angel, Rev.* ix. 1. there is an expreſs prediction of this ſore calamity that was to befall the chriſtian church from the *Arabians and Saracens*; who would be permitted to exerciſe great cruelties upon all that *had not* (*k*) *the ſeal of God in their foreheads*; who were not the worſhipers of the only true *God*.

And all writers conſpire in bearing teſtimony to the extreme depravity of chriſtians at that period, (*l*) and their diſſenſions, animoſities, and murdering

(*i*) The Works of Joſeph Mede, B. D. p. 467.

(*k*) *That had not the ſeal of God in their foreheads.*] Many of the inhabitants of Savoy, Piedmont, Milan, and the ſouthern parts of France, are ſaid to have been untainted with the idolatry and corruptions of the chriſtian church in that age, and to have been remarkably preſerved from the ravages of theſe Mahometan invaders. See Whiſton on the Revelation, p. 194.

(*l*) "To theſe cauſes of the progreſs of Mahometiſm, "we may add the bitter diſſenſions and cruel animoſities "that reigned among the chriſtian ſects, particularly, the "Greeks, Neſtorians, Eutychians, and Monophyſites; diſ-"ſenſions that filled a great part of the eaſt with carnage, "aſſaſſinations, and ſuch deteſtable enormities, as rendered "the very name of chriſtianity odious to many." *Moſheim*, Eccl. Hiſt. vol. II. p. 9.

"The terrible deſtruction of the eaſtern churches, once "ſo glorious and flouriſhing, by the ſudden ſpreading of "Mahometiſm, and the great ſucceſſes of its profeſſors "againſt the *chriſtians*, neceſſarily inſpire a horror of that "religion in thoſe to whom it has been ſo fatal; and no "wonder, if they endeavour to ſet the character of its "founder, and its doctrines, in the moſt infamous light. "But the damage done by Mahomet to chriſtianity ſeems "to

ing of each other, in their diſputes about the ſuppoſed divinity of Jeſus Chriſt, and the mode of it; whether he was of the *ſame*, or only of a *like* nature to God; whether he had one nature only, the human being abſorbed in the divine, or two natures, a divine and human; whether he did not conſiſt of two perſons, and the like: in the mean while, the number of demons, or of deified men and women, called Saints, continually increaſing, with their idolatrous worſhip, and the ſupreme Father of all and only true God, being in danger of being ſet aſide or forgotten by his creatures. So that Mahometiſm, with all its ſtains and blemiſhes, may have been a purer religion, than chriſtianity was likely to have turned out in that dark age, and in thoſe countries. And as the Almighty, after the flood, ſeparated the family of Abraham from the reſt of the nations, to preſerve the knowlege and worſhip of himſelf from being intirely loſt: ſo in his ordinary providence this falſe prophet aroſe, and was permitted to forge and propagate a new religion, to give a check to the growing idolatry of chriſtians, to keep up the knowlege of the Divine Unity, and to be a ſtanding witneſs againſt giving any equals, any aſſociates or companions to the infinite, almighty, eternal God, and Parent of the univerſe.

In the view of ſuch an awful viſitation, and deſolation of the chriſtian church, and her put to its progreſs for ſo many ages and over ſo large a

" to have been rather owing to his ignorance than his malice. " For his great misfortune was, his not having a competent " knowlege of the real and pure doctrines of the *chriſtian* " religion; which was in his time ſo abominably corrupted, " that it is not ſurprizing if he went too far, and reſolved " to aboliſh what he might think incapable of reformation." *Sale*'s Koran. Prelim. Diſc. p. 40.

part of the globe, it miniſters a peculiar ſatisfaction to find this falſe prophet profeſſing ſuch a veneration for Moſes, and the prophets, and for (*m*) Chriſt in particular, in acknowleging their divine miſſions, in founding his own upon them, and in borrowing ſo much continually from the hebrew and chriſtian Scriptures, and inſerting it in the Koran, or Mahometan Bible.

There we meet with juſt and affecting deſcriptions of the wiſdom, power, and goodneſs of the Almighty Being.

There encouragement is given to have recourſe to the Almighty in prayer; and the frequency of the practice is injoined.

There they are commanded to ſhew kindneſs, and to do good, without looking for any thing again, from men.

Whilſt moſt pernicious, unlawful indulgencies are granted to the men in the commerce between the ſexes; the ſtricteſt temperance in all other reſpects is preſcribed.

And above all, (*n*) a reſurrection to life, and a day of ſolemn, awful judgment, in which men's actions,

(*m*) "We alſo cauſed JESUS the ſon of MARY to follow "the footſteps of *the prophets*, confirming the law which *was* "*ſent down* before him; and we gave him the goſpel con- "taining direction and light; confirming alſo the law which "*was given* before it, and a direction and admonition unto "thoſe who fear GOD: that they who have received the "goſpel, might judge according to what GOD hath re- "vealed therein: and whoſo judgeth not according to what "GOD hath revealed, they are tranſgreſſors." Sale's Koran, p. 89.

(*n*) "God produceth creatures, and will hereafter reſtore "them to life: then ſhall ye return unto him. And on the "day whereon the hour ſhall come, the wicked ſhall be "ſtruck dumb for deſpair: and they ſhall have no inter- "ceſſors from among the idols, which they aſſociated with "God, and they ſhall deny the falſe gods, which they aſſo- "ciated

actions, good and evil are to be weighed *in* a balance, and ſentence accordingly to happineſs or miſery pronounced upon them; are deſcribed in the ſtrongeſt and moſt awakening terms.

" ciated with him.—They who ſhall have believed, and " wrought righteouſneſs, ſhall take their pleaſure in a de- " lightful meadow: but as for thoſe who ſhall have diſ- " believed and rejected our ſigns, and the meeting of the " next life, they ſhall be delivered up to puniſhment. " Wherefore glorify God, when the evening overtaketh you, " and when ye riſe in the morning: and unto him be praiſe " in heaven and earth; and at ſun-ſet, and when ye reſt at " noon." Id. ibid. p. 332. N. B. There follow in this chapter many fine proofs of the greatneſs, power, wiſdom and dominion of God, with frequent condemnation of thoſe who *attribute companions unto* HIM, and *aſſociate* other gods, and objects of worſhip with him.

" The juſt——give food unto the poor, and the orphan, " and the bondman, for *his* ſake, *ſaying*, we feed you for " God's ſake only: we deſire no recompenſe from you, nor " any thanks: verily we dread from our LORD, a diſmal and " calamitous day. Wherefore God ſhall deliver them from " the evil of that day, and ſhall caſt on them brightneſs of " countenance and joy; and ſhall reward them, for their " patient perſevering, with a garden, and ſilk garments: " therein ſhall they repoſe themſelves on couches; they ſhall " ſee therein neither ſun nor moon; (*viz.* as not needing " the light of either) and the ſhades thereof ſhall be near " ſpreading over them, and the fruits thereof ſhall hang low " ſo as eaſily to be gathered:——and their Lord ſhall give " them to drink of a moſt pure liquor; and ſhall ſay unto " them, Verily this is your reward: and your endeavour " is gratefully accepted." He then cloſes with this ex- hortation to himſelf for the divine goodneſs to him. " Where- " fore commemorate the name of thy LORD, in the morning, " and in the evening: and during ſome part of the night " worſhip him, and praiſe him a long part of the night." Id. ibid. p. 475, 476.

How much to be lamented, that theſe right and affecting ſentiments of God and human duty, and chaſte images of the expectations of the righteous from him hereafter, ſhould, in other parts, be debaſed and contaminated by accommodating his doctrine to his worldly ambitious views, and the low brutal paſſions of himſelf and his countrymen!

Who can but rejoice, that ſo many thouſands and ten thouſands of God's creatures, for many long ſucceſſive generations, however deprived of the purity of the goſpel-light, do nevertheleſs continue to enjoy ſo much of it, and of the means of virtuous improvement for a future ſtate, ſo as to ſet them far, very far above what nature's light unaſſiſted ever taught.

It affords alſo a moſt pleaſing proſpect, that the high regards expreſſed in the Koran for Moſes and Chriſt, will open an eaſy door to ſhew the falſe pretenſions of Mahomet, as a divine prophet, when chriſtians ſhall revert to the knowlege of (*o*) the only true God, and Father of all, and the ſimplicity of his worſhip; and when they ſhall better adorn the pure and perfect moral of the goſpel by their own practice. And in the mean time, the continuance of this falſe religion, ſo juſt and true in this article of the Divine Unity, is a providential warning to chriſtians, to return to the doctrine of nature, and of every revelation given by the God

(*o*) " O ye who have received the ſcriptures, *exceed not the* " *juſt bounds in your religion*, neither ſay of GOD any other " than the truth. Verily CHRIST JESUS, the ſon of MARY, " is the apoſtle of GOD, and his Word which he conveyed " unto MARY, and a ſpirit proceeding from him. Believe " therefore in GOD, and his apoſtles, and ſay not, *there are* " *three* GODS: forbear this; it will be better for you. GOD " is but one GOD. Far be it from him that he ſhould have " a ſon! (ſee p. 140, 141.) Unto him belongeth whatſo- " ever is in heaven, or on earth; and GOD is a ſufficient " protector. CHRIST doth not proudly diſdain to be a " ſervant unto GOD; neither the angels who approach near " to his preſence. And whoſo diſdaineth his ſervice, and " is puffed up with pride, GOD will gather them all to him- " ſelf at the laſt day." *Sale*'s Koran, p. 80, 81.

" *Exceed not the juſt bounds in your religion.*] Either by " rejecting and contemning of Jeſus, as the Jews do; or " *raiſing him to an equality with God*, as do the chriſtians." Mr. *Sale*'s note.

of nature; *viz.* that HE *is but one Perſon*, one ſingle intelligent agent; and that no other perſon is to be joined or aſſociated with him, as God; or as an object of devout religious application and prayer.

We cannot but obſerve the change in Mr. Robinſon's ſtile and manner, in the few words that he oppoſes to the doctrine of the Divine Unity, as taught in the Koran. It would ſeem as if he felt the great difficulties of the taſk he had undertaken, and the ground not to be quite ſafe under him. And it is no diſcredit to him, nor a thing to be wondered at: for I believe the difficulties will be found to be inſuperable. But let us attend to what he produces.

It being univerſally allowed, that Mahomet held that there is but one God; a thing indeed that cannot be denied, for it ſhines through every page of the Koran; Mr. Robinſon thus remarks upon it. "We anſwer the unity of God is diſcoverable "by the light of nature; it is a truth of natural "religion: but the doctrine of Chriſt's perſon is "a truth of revelation. Of the truths of reve-"lation, Chriſt and his apoſtles ſpeak. The gene-"rality of chriſtians underſtand a truth of revela-"tion in one ſenſe. Mahomet and his followers "underſtand it in a contrary ſenſe. A high degree "of probability is againſt the latter." p. 54.

It is not here denied, that Mahomet holds the unity of God, but that the unity which the generality of chriſtians hold, is the righter of the two. Our author's judgment however will be found here as much miſtaken as at other times. For it is of no conſequence what the generality of chriſtians *underſtood* concerning a truth of revelation, if it may be proved, and it has been abundantly ſhewn in this inſtance, that they *miſunderſtand* it, by a

ſtrange unſcriptural multiplication of Deity, and by their joining two other perſons, Jeſus and the Holy Spirit, with the ſupreme Father, and calling *them*, theſe three perſons, one God. Some things Mr. Robinſon ſcatters in different parts of his work, tending to ſhew that the divine unity is not broken, by his aſſerting Jeſus to be the ſupreme God. But they are of no validity. Thus, p. 25. citing John x. 20. *I and my Father are* ONE; he ſays, with reference to it, "According "to my ſyſtem, *Jeſus*, *the Father*, and *the true* "*God*, ARE ONE." But it may equally be proved, by the like argument, that *Jeſus*, *the Father*, *the eleven diſciples*, and *the true God*, ARE ONE. For Chriſt prays, John xvii. 11. *Holy Father*, *keep in thy name thoſe whom thou haſt given me*; *that* THEY *may be* ONE, *as* WE ARE. In the paſſages of Scripture hitherto quoted by him, it has been ſhewn, and will be ſeen in all that remain, that he is intirely miſtaken in his deductions from them, that Chriſt is Jehovah, the ſupreme God. For that the perſon of the Father of the univerſe, by himſelf alone, is God, the only true God; and Jeſus Chriſt is no perſon or part of the Deity, more than any other creature may be ſaid to be, when receiving a commiſſion and extraordinary power from the Father of all, to act in his name, or by his expreſs direction and authority, and thereby more nearly as it were related to and connected with him.

Whatever efforts be uſed, it ſeems to me that it will not be poſſible to ſet aſide the unity of God, taught by Mahomet, without condemning that which Moſes taught and Jeſus adopted (Deut. vi. 4. Mark xii. 28, 29.) from him: both of whom this falſe prophet acknowleged to have been prophets of God, and in this great point copied after them. We have

a ſtrong

a ſtrong proof of this, in a valuable work (*p*) very lately publiſhed, being "A Compariſon of Ma-"hometiſm and Chriſtianity, in their hiſtory, their "evidence, and their effects;" where it is very conſpicuous how much the learned writer is embaraſſed in this reſpect. In one place, p. 311, after having juſtly, and with much beauty and energy remarked, that there is nothing new in the fine deſcriptions of the Deity and of his natural and moral perfections, which affect us ſo much and ſurprize us with their unuſual grandeur, in the Koran; "that it only reechoes the doctrines, and "feebly imitates the expreſſions of the inſpired "penmen of the Old and New Teſtament. Even "(proceeds he) that grand and fundamental doc-"trine of the Unity of the Supreme Being, the "eſtabliſhment of which was conſtantly alleged "by the impoſtor as the primary cauſe of his pre-"tended miſſion, contains no novel or unknown "truth. It is the leading principle of the religion "of nature; and it conſtituted one of the moſt "important and diſtinguiſhing parts of a former "revelation. The manifeſtation and preſervation "of this momentous truth was one great end, to "which the Moſaic inſtitution was ſubſervient." —So far is diſtinctly and juſtly defined and delivered. But here the writer ought to have ſtop'd: for here Mahomet took his ſtand, as he well might; and called aloud to chriſtian as well as heathen idolaters, to return to and acknowlege the God of nature, and the God of revelation, JEHOVAH, ſole Creator of all things, the only true God. What Mr. White goes on to ſubjoin, as an im-

(*p*) Sermons preached before the univerſity of Oxford, &c. by Joſeph White, B. D. fellow of Wadham College, and Laudian Profeſſor of Arabic. 1784.

provement

provement of the doctrine of the Divine Unity made by the gospel, is in reality one of its great corruptions; being nothing else than heathenish additions, brought in by learned converts from the false philosophy of the times, and grafted unhappily on the new religion which they had embraced. And the very language in which this ingenious author describes what he calls *a clearer and fuller discovery of the divine nature*, (but in truth involving it in inextricable darkness) would have been rejected by himself as unintelligible and unscriptural, if habit and religious prejudice had not rendered it sacred and familiar to him. But let us hear his own words, the continuation of what is quoted above.

——————" and even the gospel, though it " unfolds new scenes to our astonished view, and " presents us with a clearer and fuller discovery of " the divine nature, by revealing to us the myste- " rious doctrine of the existence of three Persons " in the Godhead; yet it still maintains, and pre- " serves inviolate, the Unity of the supreme " Being."

" *The existence of Three Persons in the Godhead!*" Where in the Bible is this said; or where is it to be learned? Certainly not from Moses or the prophets, from Christ or his apostles; but principally from that *creed* of an unknown author, falsely ascribed to Athanasius; which Archbishop Tillotson, a century past, *wished the Church of England were well rid of*; WHOSE Reformation, one of his pious and upright (*n*) successors, a few years ago,

(*n*) See Archbishop Herring's approbation of Dr. Clarke's Reformed Common Prayer Book, in a letter to Dr. Jortin, in the year 1753. New Review by Mr. Maty, Vol. I. p. 241.

ardently

ardently wiſhed to be carried further, and made conformable to the Scripture-model, with regard to the unity of the firſt cauſe of all things, and ſingle object of worſhip therein recommended. Throughout the ſacred code, from the beginning to the end, the one, ſupreme, almighty Being, ſpeaks of himſelf, and is ſpoken of by his prophets, and by holy men his ſervants, as *one ſingle Perſon*, as clearly as I that now write this, am one ſingle perſon. Jeſus, in moſt expreſs terms, declares *the Perſon of the Father*, as diſtinguiſhed from himſelf, (John xvii. 3.) to be *the only true God*. All the texts of Scripture, which from the ſenſe, the ſound, or the appearance of them, Mr. Robinſon has with great diligence gleaned and ranged in order, as furniſhing evidence of Chriſt's being the ſupreme God, have been conſidered, and ſhewn not to prove him to be any thing above the condition of a creature. As to the Holy Spirit, ſuppoſed to be a Third Divine Perſon, diſtinct from the Father: this notion is now very generally (*p*) abandoned by all careful unprejudiced inquirers into the word of God; it being plain there, that *the Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit*, is either the divine influence and power; or elſe, the *Spirit of God* is *God* himſelf, not a perſon diſtinct from him; (1 Cor. ii. 11.) as the ſpirit of a man is the man himſelf, and not a perſon diſtinct from him. This learned Profeſſor, with many others, may figure to themſelves *the exiſtence of* what he calls, *Three Perſons in the Godhead*; may ſtile theſe perſons by diſtinct proper names, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt; may alſo

(*p*) The late pious Dr. Watts, *is ſaid* to have left out of his creed this third Perſon of the Trinity: which if it be fact, for I am not converſant with his works, his admirers would do well to conſider.

worſhip

worſhip and invoke in prayer each of theſe Perſons ſeparately, and imagine all the while they worſhip but one God; but this will have no effect upon thoſe, who find *no exiſtence of any Perſon as God*, in the Scriptures, but the Perſon of the Almighty Father alone; and who feel it a thing impoſſible to be admitted, that three intelligent agents are numerically one intelligent agent; for that the three divine Perſons, as chriſtians commonly underſtand them, ſpeak of them, and addreſs them in prayer; are three Gods.

Near the cloſe of his work, Mr. White gives this juſt encomium of the ſacred writers; that, " inſtead of bewildering us in intricate and abſtract " ſpeculations upon *Unity*, they tell us that we are " *to worſhip the* LORD *our God, and him only we are* " *to ſerve.*" But this ingenious writer did not conſider that by this citation of Chriſt's words, he excludes the admiſſion of any other Perſon but Jehovah, the LORD *our God*, from being God, or worſhiped; and deſtroys, what he ſtiles p. 81, " the " ſacred and myſterious doctrine of a Trinity in " Unity." For when Chriſt ſays of Jehovah, the LORD our God; that HIM only we are to ſerve: he himſelf, and every other perſon is thereby ſhut out from all claim of adoration and worſhip; and one ſingle Perſon, that of Jehovah, the Father only, pronounced to be the object of worſhip.

May we not then hence conclude, that Mahomet had juſt ſentiments of the Unity of God; and that whatever falſe and impure doctrines be adopted; yet in worſhiping and calling upon all to worſhip the God of Moſes, and of Chriſt, he was a worſhiper of the one true God.

SEC.

SECTION X.

Whether numberleſs paſſages of Scripture have no ſenſe, or a very abſurd one, if Jeſus Chriſt be a mere man.

THE next head of our author's work, is thus expreſſed. " *Conſider what numberleſs paſ-* " *ſages of Scripture have no ſenſe, or a very abſurd* " *one, if Jeſus Chriſt be a mere man.*" He then thus proceeds to give a few inſtances.

" *Jeſus Chriſt was* (*q*) *made of the ſeed of David* " *according to the fleſh.* Rom. i. 3. What a ſtrange " expreſſion! It might as well be ſaid, *Paul was* " *made of the ſeed of Benjamin according to the fleſh.* " What would ſuch a ſaying mean?"

Our author is very unlucky at his firſt ſetting out; ſince the very paſſage he produces, is a direct aſſertion of the apoſtle's, that Jeſus Chriſt was a mortal man. For that is intended by the phraſe, " being made of the ſeed of David *according to the* " *fleſh.*" This will appear from attending to the

(*q*) *made* of the ſeed of David] It ſhould be *born*, not *made*: as it ought alſo to be rendered, Gal. iv. 4. *born* of a woman, &c. Grotius well ſays, *cæpit exiſtere*; he then began to exiſt, having had no exiſtence before: for that is the meaning of *being born*. And when chriſtians are at liberty from ancient inveterate prejudice to make uſe of their underſtandings, and interpret the Scripture-language when applied to Chriſt, as they do when applied to themſelves, and according to the ſame rules of ſound ſenſe and juſt criticiſm, by which they inveſtigate the meaning of words in other ancient writings, they will come to a better agreement on theſe points. Raphelius has a good note here upon the groundleſs fancy of ſome of the fathers, and others ſince maintaining, that it ought to be read *made* and not *born*, to ſignify that Chriſt was not born after the ordinary manner of men; which he well obſerves, if it were not elſewhere declared, could never have been proved hence.

meaning

meaning of it in other parts of the ſacred writings, eſpecially thoſe of Paul.

Acts ii. 30. *That of the fruit of his loins*, according to the fleſh (*s*), *he would raiſe up Chriſt*; i. e. of the fruit of his mortal body; one of his lineal deſcendants.

Rom. ix. 4. *My kinſmen* according to the *fleſh*; i. e. in this mortal ſtate.

—— — 5. *Of whom*, as concerning the fleſh, rather, according to the fleſh, το κατα σαρκα, *Chriſt came*: i. e. from whom Chriſt, in his mortal ſtate, deſcended.

2 Cor. v. 16. *Wherefore henceforth know we no man* after (κατα σαρκα, according to) the fleſh: *yea, though we have known Chriſt* after the fleſh, *yet now henceforth know we him no more.* i. e. Being now wholly devoted to Chriſt in the ſervice of the goſpel, *he would know no man after the fleſh*, i. e. would not be ſwayed by any *mortal* connections: nay, had he known Chriſt in his *mortal* ſtate, or been of his near kindred, he would not value himſelf for it: as it was not a thing that Chriſt regarded at all, or eſtimated characters by it.

Eph. vi. 5. Col. iii. 22. *Servants, be obedient to your maſters* according to the fleſh: i. e. your maſters in this mortal ſtate.

Heb. v. 7. *Who* (i. e. Chriſt) *in the days* of his fleſh, (i. e. in the time of his mortal life) *when*

(*s*) *Fleſh* ſignifies man as mortal. Iſaiah xl. 5, 6. Acts ii. 17. Rom. iii. 20. Gal. ii. 16. But though κατα σαρκα, *according to the* fleſh, generally ſignifies man as in this mortal ſtate; it ſometimes is uſed for earthly privileges, worldly appearances, John viii. 15. 2 Cor. x. 18: at other times, the following carnal appetites, Rom. iii. 4, 5, 6. &c. 2 Cor. x. 3: both of them by an eaſy derivation from the original meaning of the word.

he

he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears (alluding to his agony in the garden) *was heard*, i. e. had assistance granted him.

The true sense then of this passage, whatever our author would fix upon it, is; that Christ was a mere man, a mortal creature. And there would have been nothing absurd, if our apostle, in speaking of himself, had adopted the same language which he uses concerning his divine master; that he (*Paul*) *was made or born of the seed of Benjamin according to the flesh.* And the answer to a question put here, "what would such a saying mean?" is; it means and demonstrates, that in the account and estimate of Paul, Jesus Christ was a (*t*) human creature as well as himself.

But then, lest any should go away with the notion, that by his being a mortal, or mere man, as our author words it, was to be understood, that he was in no respect above the ordinary rate of men; the apostle, it well deserves to be observed, goes on to add; that he was also, ver. 4. *declared* (or demonstrated) *to be the Son of God* (i. e. (*u*) the Christ, the Messiah) *with power according to the spirit of holiness* (or the holy spirit), *by the resurrection from the dead.*

What now does Paul tell these christians at Rome, to whom he is writing, in these four first

(*t*) It is the stile in which our Lord speaks of himself, in his present exalted state in heaven; *I am Jesus of Nazareth*, Acts xxii. 8: as though he had said; *I am he who was once a mortal man.*

(*u*) *The Son of God* was a phrase in common use among the Jews, like *the son of David*, to signify their great expected prophet, the Messiah, the Christ. This is acknowleged by writers otherwise of different sentiments concerning our Lord's person.

verses,

verſes of his letter to them? He ſays then, in other words; "That being a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, and having had a divine extraordinary call to preach the goſpel, and an appointment to be the apoſtle of the gentiles, he took the opportunity of ſpeaking to them concerning Jeſus Chriſt, their common lord and maſter: who, a few years before only had been brought into life, a mortal man, of David's family, as had been foretold by their Hebrew prophets. But that he was to be regarded in a much higher light by them; as having been, in a moſt expreſs manner, ορισθεντος, *moſt deciſively declared* to be *the Son of God*, the Meſſiah, their great promiſed prophet, *with power according to the holy ſpirit*, i. e. the atteſtations of a divine moſt extraordinary power, manifeſted at his baptiſm, which accompanied him during his public miniſtry, and was moſt particularly exerted in his reſurrection from the dead, which wiped away all the ignominy of his laſt ſufferings and death.

I have not dwelled ſo much on this paſſage for the ſake of obviating our author's trivial concluſions from it; but becauſe it exhibits a clear account of the perſon and true character of Jeſus Chriſt, as they appeared to the apoſtle.

His next inſtance is thus put: *Great is the myſtery of godlineſs*, "*God was manifeſt in the fleſh*, 1 Tim. "iii. 16. According to the principle which we "oppoſe, St. Paul ſays, *Great is the myſtery of* "*godlineſs:* What? God made a very wiſe man. "A great myſtery indeed!"

It has been ſeen above, p. 13, 14. how this paſſage of the apoſtle is to be *read*, and underſtood; and that he is far from intending therein to deſcribe Jeſus Chriſt as any other than a human being, highly favoured of almighty God.

The

The apoſtle moſt probably wrote; (*w*) WHICH *was manifeſt in the fleſh:* but if the *reading* be; GOD *was manifeſt in the fleſh*; and it be interpreted, as it then muſt be, of the almighty Being making known himſelf to mankind, by inveſting a *mortal* man, Jeſus of Nazareth, with extraordinary gifts of wiſdom and power, to declare his will and goodneſs, and to bring the whole human ſpecies to virtue and an immortal exiſtence: I do not ſee any thing herein to be undervalued, or that is unequal to the grandeur of the preface, with which it is introduced; *viz. Great is the myſtery of godlineſs.* For it contains all that is moſt glorious and ſublime, and worthy the moſt perfect Being; and is not to be diſparaged by our author's diminutive account of it: *God made a very wiſe man.*

He proceeds. "*He that hath ſeen me, hath "ſeen the Father.* John xiv. 19. That is, He, "that hath ſeen me, hath heard my doctrine."

It is difficult to diſcover, why this paſſage is introduced by our author, unleſs he would have it inferred from the literal conſtruction of it, that Chriſt is the ſupreme Father of all, or a perſon equal to him. But it might in the ſame way be

(*w*) Dr. Mill remarks, that none of the catholic fathers, that he knew of, who profeſſedly collected all the texts of Scripture in proof of Chriſt's divinity, ever alleged this text, before the year 380; *Gregory Nyſſen* firſt of all, &c. And Dr. Clarke notes: "It muſt not be judged from the *preſent* "copies of the text in *Nyſſen* and others, but from the "*manner* of their *commenting* upon the place, how the text "was read in *their* days. In the days of *Julian*, when that "emperor aſſerted, that neither Matthew, Mark, Luke, "nor Paul, ever ventured to ſtile Chriſt, God; it is plain, "from *Cyril's* anſwer to this aſſertion of *Julian*, that even "at that time, the word, Θεος, *God*, was not found in this "text." Script. Doctr. p. 89.

proved, not only that Chriſt, but that his apoſtles, were equal to the Father; from Chriſt ſaying to them, Matth. x. 40. *He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me.*

The true ſtate of the caſe is; that *ſeeing the Father* here, the ſame with *knowing him*, ver. 7. ſignifies, the being acquainted with his will and gracious deſigns in the goſpel. We find the paſſage thus expounded John i. 18. *No man hath ſeen God at any time; the beloved Son, who is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared,* or rather *hath made him known*; i. e. "No other perſon hath ever been admitted to the knowlege of the deſigns of God for the ſalvation of mankind, but the well-beloved ſon, who *is in his boſom*, i. e. is intimately intruſted by him." As this then is the true meaning of the language here uſed; it by no means ſuits our author's particular ſyſtem, or comes up to the high notions of Chriſt being the ſupreme God, into which it has led him.

Our author then adds,; "*O Father, glorify thou* "*me with thine ownſelf, with the glory which I had* "*with thee before the world was.* John xvii. 5. "According to the notion which we oppoſe, our "Saviour means; glorify me with the glory which "was decreed for me before the world was. As "well might Paul have ſaid, when he was ſhip-"wrecked; ſave us on boards and on broken "pieces of the ſhip, with that ſafety which we had "with thee before the world was."

Whoever conſiders our Saviour's ſituation at the time of his offering this prayer to Almighty God, and what he afterwards mentions concerning this *glory* that he here prays for, *viz.* that he had promiſed it to his diſciples, and that they were to ſhare with him in it; will find, that it was not any dignity,

dignity, preeminence, or felicity, which he had poſſeſſed in a ſuppoſed former ſtate, and to which he deſired to be reſtored; but that what he beſought of God, was the ſucceſs of the goſpel, in promoting the virtue and happineſs of mankind; which lay near his heart, and would now naturally be the ſubject of his prayer; of which he had been the prime inſtrument, and was ſoon to reſign his office to his diſciples. And he ſpeaks of it with pleaſure and confidence, as a thing which he *had with the Father before the world was*, i. e. had deſigned for him: becauſe there had been various prophecies given by the Almighty concerning it, from which he was as fully aſſured of it, as if it were actually in his poſſeſſion. It is the very language which is uſed concerning him, when it is ſaid, that he was (Rev. xiii. 8.) *the lamb ſlain before the foundation of the world*—that is, ſo deſigned to be by that Being, known unto whom are all his works from the beginning: though his violent death actually took place, not 1800 years ſince. It is the very language which he himſelf uſes in this prayer concerning his diſciples, where he ſays, ver. 22. *And the glory which thou haſt given me, I have given them.* Where, let it be obſerved, how God had given it him: not *actually* beſtowed it; for then he would not have prayed for it, as it would have been a vain thing, to have aſked for what he had already, and did not want: but God had *given it him* by promiſe; had foreordained that he ſhould enjoy it. And in the ſame way, by permiſſion and warrant from Almighty God, he had given it to his faithful followers; i. e. had promiſed them the actual poſſeſſion of ſuch high glory, honour and happineſs, to be ſucceſsful inſtruments in forwarding the final ſalvation of men.

The caſe of Paul therefore put by our author, by way of ridicule of what he underſtood not, is too trifling to be noticed: Only it may be obſerved, that if Paul's preſervation from ſhipwreck, had been of importance enough to have been foretold by Almighty God, it might have been ſaid of him; that *he had been ſaved with a ſafety, which he had with God before the world was.*

The laſt inſtance to be mentioned, wherein our author charges the Scripture with having no ſenſe, or a very abſurd one, if Jeſus Chriſt be a mere man, and not the ſupreme God, is thus ſtated. "*Jeſus Chriſt, being in the form of God, thought "it not robbery to be equal with* God. Phil. ii. 6. "That is, ſay ſome; Jeſus, not being God, thought "not of the robbery of being equal with God. "Glorious humility! A creature did not think of "ranking himſelf with the creator! The humbleſt "effort of the wiſeſt human mind, was only not to "equal itſelf with Jehovah!"

It hath been intimated above, that there is a degree of negligence in our author far from being commendable, in recurring ſo often to our faulty engliſh tranſlation of this verſe, which ſo much miſrepreſents the apoſtle's meaning. For in exhorting the chriſtians of Philippi, to imitate the humility of Chriſt Jeſus, he does not ſay, that being in the form of God, *he thought it not robbery to be equal with God*; but (*x*) that *he did not eagerly covet*

(*x*) There is a fine paſſage, in a letter from the churches of Lyons and Vienne in France, written ſoon after the year 177, concerning their brethren who underwent the moſt cruel tortures for the goſpel at that time; which ſhews that they underſtood the apoſtle's words in the ſenſe we have given them. Euſebius, who has preſerved theſe valuable remains, prefaces them with ſaying; "It may be worth the while to take ſome-"what

covet to be like to God, i. e. to make an oſtentatious uſe of thoſe divine powers with which he was indued. In this way of conſtruction, all our author's remarks are loſt. Creature as the bleſſed Jeſus was, of the human race, it was a glorious humility in him, in the uſe of ſuch a godlike power as he was intruſted with, not to be elated by that which above all other things is the moſt dangerous ſnare to the human mind; to be carried out by it to ſeek his own eaſe, or honour from men: but in the midſt of the moſt unwearied labours, and exertions to do them the greateſt acts of kindneſs, in reſpect of their preſent and future life, to ſhun the praiſe of it, and to be the more humbled thereby before God; generally injoining them to pay their thanks to HIM, for thoſe ſtupendous acts of divine goodneſs which himſelf did for them; and often taking occaſion to diſ-

" what more from that Epiſtle, wherein the meekneſs and " humanity of the forementioned martyrs is deſcribed in " theſe words. ' Who alſo were ſo far followers and imita- " tors of Chriſt, *who being in the form of God did not eagerly* " *covet to* be, or to *appear like God:* that though they were " in ſo great glory, having ſuffered as martyrs, not once " only, or twice, but often: although they had been toſſed " by wild beaſts, and then committed again to priſon: al- " though they had the marks of fire, and ſcars and wounds " all over them: they did not declare themſelves to be mar- " tyrs, nor allow us to call them by that name. But if at " any time any one of us, either in a letter, or in diſcourſe, " termed them martyrs, they reproved us ſharply. But " they readily aſcribed the honour of martyrdom to Chriſt, " *the faithful and true witneſs, and the firſt-begotten from the* " *dead, and the prince of the life of God.*" See Lardner's Teſtimonies, Vol. ii. p. 209, 210. It is well obſerved, that the parallel here drawn between Chriſt and theſe martyrs, ſhews undeniably in what ſenſe the phraſe in St. Paul to the Philippians was underſtood: and that they knew how to diſtinguiſh between God and his moſt faithful witneſs, and martyr, Jeſus.

claim all merit in himſelf, and to aſcribe every thing to the Father; i. e. to the God that made him, and gave him all his powers.

After this, our author produces Rev. v. 13. but it will be better to cite the whole paſſage to which it belongs, ver. 11, 12, 13. *And I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſands of thouſands; ſaying with a loud voice: Worthy is* the lamb that was ſlain, *to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and ſuch as are in the ſea, and all that are in them, heard I, ſaying; bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power,* be unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and to the lamb *for ever and ever.*

This paſſage is introduced, to ſhew that Mr. Lindſey in his Apology argues inconcluſively; where he would ſhew, that the worſhip in this viſionary repreſentation aſcribed to Chriſt, was ſuch as belonged to a creature, and not to God. With this charge we have nothing to do. But it may be obſerved, that this aſcription of honour to Chriſt in the ſame terms as to God, no more implies that Chriſt is God, and the object of religious worſhip, than the worſhip ſpoken of in ſimilar terms, as paid by the Iſraelites to David (1 Chron. xxix. 20.) and Jehovah, implied David to be Jehovah, God of Iſrael. In both caſes the degree of honour or worſhip appropriate to each, was tendered; to David, what was due to a king ſet over them by Almighty God; to Chriſt, what was due to *the lamb ſlain,* as he is expreſsly ſtiled; i. e. to a mortal creature, highly exalted for his glorious ſufferings

ſufferings in the cauſe of truth and virtue, and of God.

The reader muſt judge, whether Mr. Lindſey is miſtaken in what is farther alleged by our author; or whether he be not deceived himſelf, in taking advantage of the ambiguous meaning of the term *worſhip:* which, both in Scripture, and in common diſcourſe, is indifferently applied to the reſpect paid to creatures, as well as the ſupreme Being; and therefore it cannot be concluded that authors mean the worſhip appropriated to God, when they ſpeak of paying worſhip to Chriſt; although it would become them to be more guarded in their uſe of ſuch terms; and Mr. Lindſey is not ſufficiently ſo, in calling Stephen's requeſt to Chriſt, a *prayer*, (though it be a word ſometimes uſed of petitions which mortals make to each other;) of which our author fails not to avail himſelf, p. 78.

It would be wrong perhaps to paſs by unnoticed an extraordinary concluſion, which our author makes ſoon after, p. 59, from the narrative of St. Paul's converſion, in *The Acts*.

In the firſt account of it, given by the ſacred hiſtorian; Ananias, who was the inſtrument employed, ſays; (Acts ix. 17.) *Brother Saul, the* Lord, (even Jeſus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou cameſt,) *hath ſent me, that thou mayeſt receive thy ſight, and be filled with the holy ſpirit.* But St. Paul, in his own recital, Acts xxii. 14. relates, that Ananias ſaid; *The* God of our fathers *hath choſen thee, that thou ſhouldeſt know his will, and ſee that juſt one, and ſhouldeſt hear the voice of his mouth.* And from *Jeſus* being ſaid in one place to have commiſſioned Ananias, and *the God* of their fathers in another, our author ſays, that

Ananias declares Jesus to be the God of their fathers.

But Mr. Robinson did not enough consider, what we have often had occasion to remind him of, that nothing is more common than to say; that what a person orders to be done by another, he does himself. So the prophet said to David, 2 Sam. xii. 9. *Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword.* And Paul here might say, that Ananias had his commission from the God of their fathers to appoint himself to the office of preaching the gospel, very consistently with Ananias having said that Jesus Christ had sent him to do it; because Christ always acting under orders from God, whatever he did, Almighty God might very properly be said to do also. For it is too notorious to give any formal proof of it; that in his highest character, as the Messiah, as a divine extraordinary prophet and messenger, the blessed Jesus never assumed any thing to himself, but uniformly declared that he was the messenger of the Father, *sent* by him; that he delivered nothing but what he had *heard of*, and *seen with him*; i. e. had been taught by him. Even after his resurrection, speaking to his disciples of the extraordinary support that would be vouchsafed to them in preaching the gospel throughout the world, he tells them, *All power is* GIVEN *unto me in heaven and in earth*; i. e. that the divine extraordinary assistance would be supplied, as it was wanted by his disciples, in their great work, from the heavenly Father, and Giver of all things to himself and to all. And the preface to the last book of the christian Scriptures, opens thus, "The Revelation of *Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him*, to shew unto his servant things which must shortly come to pass." Which declaration being made at the beginning, it necessarily follows, that whatever authority Christ

Chriſt aſſumes afterward; whatever knowlege he lays claim to; he muſt be conſidered as having received it from Almighty God, and holding it under him. And therefore when he ſays, Rev. ii. 23. *I am he which ſearcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give to every one of you according to his works:* he only ſpeaks of that high diſcernment and ability, which God had beſtowed upon him, upon that occaſion.

After a brief recapitulation of the former part of his work, a ſample whereof hath been exhibited above p. 79, our author ſpends the next ten pages, in conſidering their opinion, who hold Chriſt, before he was born at Bethlehem, to have been a created, ſubordinate ſpirit, by whom God made the world. We have nothing to ſay to this doctrine; but would remark this only: that our Saviour Chriſt himſelf ſeems to have been totally ignorant of it, as well as of his having been the ſupreme God, as our author would have him to be; never requiring any regards to be paid to him on ſuch accounts, or grounding any obligation upon any thing that he was before he was born: which plainly ſpeaks as if he himſelf was not conſcious of having lived in any former ſtate.

We are next preſented with a *Primitive chriſtian*, raiſed up for the purpoſe, to be catechized upon the great point of Jeſus Chriſt being the ſupreme God. One would unqueſtionably be glad to hear the genuine ſentiments of a diſciple of the apoſtles, directly and expreſsly, upon a matter of ſuch importance. But unfortunately here, as before when he exhibited John the Baptiſt, it is none other than our author himſelf under a maſk, who perſonates a primitive chriſtian, the better to enforce his own peculiar notions; for he is very fertile in ſuch ingenious devices to allure his readers. One or two ſpecimens of his method

of

of catechizing, will satisfy any one, that this is the real fact.

" Q. Who is Jesus Christ? A. *Jesus Christ is a* " *man.* 1 Tim. ii. 5. *Jesus Christ is* GOD. John i. 1."

One wonders how any one can be so presuming, as to put his own words instead of the apostle's, and cite them as the apostle's (*y*). The apostle says, *The Word was God*; and though it is Mr. Robinson's private opinion, that the term *Word* signifies Jesus Christ, he should not have substituted a different term from the apostle's to countenance his own notions, and put, *Christ is God*, instead of *The Word was God*. The proposition however is intirely his own. For we have seen above that the genuine words and right construction of them, do not favour any such extravagant hypothesis. A true primitive christian would have replied to him; *Jesus Christ was a man, and not God*; and would perhaps have quoted that assertion of Paul's; *To us, there is but* ONE *God, the Father.* 1 Cor. viii. 6. Eph. iv. 6.

" Q. Do christians worship Jesus Christ? A. " We do not worship the man Jesus: but we do " worship the God who dwells in the man; for *in* " *him dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily.* " Col. ii. 9. and *through him we have access by* " *one spirit unto the Father.* Eph. ii. 18."

A primitive christian would not have understood or endured these metaphysical subtilties, and division of Christ into two parts, one of which was to be worshiped, and the other not: but would have answered downright; " We worship not Jesus Christ, nor any part of him, but the LORD our

(*y*) What impenetrable confusion should we have had in the sacred writings, if those who transcribed, or quoted from them in ancient times, had been as bold, or as careless and negligent as our author!

God

God only;" and would moreover have added, that the paſſage cited by St. Paul, Col. ii. 9. was nothing to the purpoſe: as we alſo have ſhewn above, p. 44, 45

Our author proceeds with his catechumen. "Q. Do chriſtians think the Father is the godhead of Jeſus Chriſt?" *I anſwer here*; A primitive chriſtian would have been in much aſtoniſhment at ſuch a ſtrange unintelligible queſtion; and ſtill more, if poſſible, at ſuch a miſconſtruction and miſrepreſentation of St. Paul's words, which our author heſitates not to put in his mouth, viz. "A. No. "We think *Jeſus being in the form of God, thought "it not robbery to be equal with God.* Phil. ii. 5, 6." Here again, this generally acknowleged falſe rendering of the apoſtle's words is brought in, to place the *humble* Jeſus (for his humility is the very point the apoſtle is proving,) upon an equality with the ſupreme God, and Father of all.

The ſuppoſed catechiſm goes on; "Q. Do not "chriſtians then worſhip two Gods?" A. We ab- "hor the thought. We ſay with the Jews; *The "Lord our God is one Lord; for there is one God, "and there is none other but he.* Mark xii. 29. 32."

A primitive chriſtian would certainly have made ſuch an anſwer; but it is not eaſy to diſcover with what truth and conſiſtency Mr. Robinſon can do it, who is continually declaring, p. 5. "I affirm, "becauſe I believe, that Jeſus Chriſt is TRULY "AND PROPERLY GOD. P. 9. The writers of the "New Teſtament meant to inform their readers, "that JESUS CHRIST IS TRULY AND PROPERLY "GOD." In another place, p. 43. through ignorance of the prophetic language concerning Chriſt and the goſpel, as has been ſhewn above, he ſcruples not to introduce John the Baptiſt ſaying; "If there be therefore any fixed meaning in

"words,

" words, any credit to be given to Jesus, JESUS " IS JEHOVAH, THE GOD OF ISRAEL." But Jesus, in his own words, in his prayer to the Father, for himself and his followers, most expressly describes that benevolent Parent of himself and of all beings, to be the *only true God*; John xvii. 1. 3. O FATHER!—*this is life eternal, to know* THEE, THE ONLY TRUE GOD, *and Jesus Christ whom* THOU *hast sent*; or, *me, to be thy messenger and servant!* Now since Jesus thus declares his Father, and the Father of all mankind, to be *the only true God*; and our author, contrary to this declaration, will make Jesus himself to be *truly and properly God*, to be *Jehovah, God of Israel*, who can absolve him from the mistake of introducing two Gods? He may satisfy himself, as I doubt not but he does, and perplex and persuade others by words without meaning, which we find him making use of in one place, p. 5. " that God is one undivided essence; " that the three persons in the deity may be dis- " tinguished, but cannot be divided;" and the like. But those who will not renounce the use of their own understandings for *school-moonshine*, as one well terms these metaphysical distinctions in the Deity; and who will allow themselves to follow the first, the plainest, and most incontrovertible principles of common sense and common arithmetic, will acknowlege; that *one, and one, make two*; that *one God*, the Father, and *another God*, Jesus Christ, do certainly count *two Gods*.

Sensible, I will not say, of his own self-contradiction, but of the inexplicable difficulties under which his doctrine laboured, our author takes refuge in one of the methods (z) which ingenious christians

(z) The other method of reconciling contradictions, and proving Christ to be the supreme God, in spite of his own positive

chriſtians have invented, of ſilencing all doubts and reconciling contradictions of Jeſus Chriſt being God, and the Father alſo being God, and yet that they are but one God; namely, that it is *a myſtery*, i. e. a ſecret, which is the meaning of the word *myſtery*; a thing hidden from mortals, not to be penetrated into by any created underſtanding, but reſerved by the Almighty for himſelf. We readily allow, who can be ignorant? that there are myſteries, things unſearchable by us, relating to the Deity, his nature, perfections, and adminiſtration of the great univerſe, and of this ſmall ſpot of

poſitive and peremptory declarations to the contrary, is, by giving him two natures, and making him conſiſt as it were of two perſons: ſo that if at any time he ſays, as he does ſay, that he was a creature of limited faculties; that comprehenſive as the extraordinary knowlege was, which God had given him to fit him for his great office, yet there were ſome things that he was not intruſted with, and of which he was ignorant, Mark xiii. 32. Acts i. 7. it is ſtraightway replied, that theſe degrading creature-like things are ſpoken by him of his human, not of his divine nature: ſo that though he ſays *he did not know the day of judgment*, they will contradict him, and tell him he did know it; not enough conſidering, that by ſuch comments of their own; they make him who was the truth itſelf, a diſſembler, and ſhut out all light concerning his real perſon and true character, from entering into their minds.

Did we not know the power of prejudice on perſons of the beſt underſtandings, we ſhould not be able to conceive it poſſible that a very late and juſtly admired author ſhould attempt to build this doctrine of two natures in Chriſt, on ſo very weak a foundation, as the following extract exhibits. "The myſterious union of the divine and human natures in "the perſon of Chriſt, was plainly ſhadowed out, and might "have been fairly inferred from theſe very prophecies; which "now pathetically predicted the meanneſs, the ſufferings, "and the ignominious death of the Meſſiah; and now with "all the warmth and boldneſs of eaſtern poetry, painted "the temporal grandeur, the victories, and the eternity of "his kingdom." White's Bampton-Lecture Sermons, p. 108.

our's, a part of it. But our concern and inquiry here, is, not about the ſecrets of the divine nature and providence, but about thoſe things which God has condeſcended to *reveal* to us concerning himſelf by his prophets, and particularly by Jeſus Chriſt. And we do not find them ſuggeſting, that there is any thing difficult or myſterious in the divine unity. But they appear to conſider, and we are left by them to conſider, God as one perſon, as we, each of us, conſider ourſelves (*a*) as one perſon; and they give us not the leaſt ground to ſuppoſe God to conſiſt of two, three, or more perſons, any more than we are to conſider ourſelves as made up of two or more perſons. This ſimple idea of God, that he is one ſingle perſon, literally pervades every page of the ſacred volumes; and there is no myſtery that is told us to be in it, or that is to be found in it. Our author however, after having receded ſo far from the true Scripture-doctrine concerning God and Chriſt, might well proceed to put the following queſtion to *his* primitive chriſtian.

Q. Is not this a little myſterious?

A. *The acknowlegement of the deity*, both *of the Father, and of Chriſt, is a myſtery, in which are treaſures of wiſdom and knowlege.*

I would not be uncandid: but I cannot but ſay, that no books will bear to be ſo treated, as our author here and elſewhere treats the Scriptures: their meaning will be miſrepreſented, and error be everlaſting. Careleſs readers, of which the number is too great, will paſs all over, without conſulting the original, while multitudes are unable

(*a*) "How can we form any notion of the unity of the "Supreme Being, but from that unity of which we our-"ſelves are conſcious." Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. Gray, p. 266.

to

to consult it, and will all of them implicitly believe, what such careless writers as Mr. Robinson, impose upon them as the truth. For where, in the original Greek, does he find the word, *deity*, mentioned, which he here foists in? and marks with the same Italic characters as the rest which are really the apostle's; and thereby deceives the reader, as if Paul spoke of the *deity* of Christ as well as of that of the Father; for which there is not any the least ground whatsoever.

The true state of the matter is this. The apostle is here (*b*) mentioning his earnest desires and endeavours, that the gentile christians of Colosse and Laodicea, might be firmly united in mutual love, and in the pursuit of the truth he preached, so as to attain the fullest assurance of it; *to the acknowlegement of the mystery of God even the Father*, Θεϑ και πατρος, και τϑ Χριϛϑ, *and of Christ*. The very form and construction of the words, *exclude*, as might well be supposed, *all deity from Christ, and appropriate it to the Father*. And the *mystery* here intended, (*c*) is no mystery concerning the nature

(*b*) The passage at length is; *I am very desirous that ye should know, what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh: that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowlegement of the mystery of God even the Father*, (i. e. of HIM who is the Father of all,) *and of Christ: In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowlege.* Col. ii. 1, 2, 3.

(*c*) " *The mystery of God even the Father and of Christ.*] " The only mystery here intended is that mentioned before " ch. i. 26, 27. in the belief of which our apostle shews " himself on all occasions so solicitous to establish the *Gen-* " *tiles.* Had he here meant any other than that, he would " have certainly told us what it was. This mystery is called " *the mystery of God, the Father*, as it well may be, since it " was

nature of God; but the myſtery mentioned juſt before, i. 26, 27; the myſtery or ſecret purpoſe of God, then no longer a myſtery, but brought to light and diſcovered particularly by St. Paul; *viz.* the calling of the Gentiles, i. e. of the whole heathen world, to the hope of eternal life, to equal privileges with the Jews in that grand point, without ſubjection to their law.

SECTION XI.

What is the ſource of men's erroneous opinions about the perſon of Chriſt, according to our author.

TOWARDS the cloſe of his work, he turns himſelf to give ſome account, why wiſe and worthy men miſtake this notion of Chriſt's *(ſuppoſed)* divinity, and maintain erroneous opinions about it. One or two of his reaſons it may be proper to conſider. The firſt is thus expreſſed, p. 73.

1. "Men miſtake by not diſtinguiſhing objects "of *pure* revelation, from objects of natural rea- "ſon, and therefore they confound believing with "reaſoning.—God requires me to believe the "deity of Jeſus Chriſt. Deity is an inviſible ob-

"was *hid in God*, Eph. iii. 9. and HE *made it known*, Eph. "i. 9. Col. i. 27. It is alſo called *the myſtery of Chriſt*, "Col. iv. 3. Eph. iii. 4: nor is it ſtrange it ſhould be de- "nominated from him, who is himſelf the ſubject matter of "it, it being *Chriſt among the* Gentiles, *the hope of glory*, "ch. i. 27; and who is the more immediate *revealer* of it, "Eph. ii. 17. The apoſtle here joins both together, as he "might very properly do: though perhaps the chief reaſon "why he choſe here to add, *and of Chriſt*, was, that he "might the more handſomely fall into the following diſcourſe "concerning him." This is an excellent note of *Peirce* upon the place.

"ject.

" ject. I never saw, nor ever conceived an object " analogous to it. I cannot reason about it. I " believe it."

If the doctrine of Christ being the supreme God, which our author seeks to establish, were to be found plainly legible throughout the Scriptures, as is the doctrine of the unity of the first cause and supreme Father of all; our author might have some grounds for striving thus to stop all inquiry about it, and requiring us to believe only, and not to reason upon what the Scriptures say of it. But the contrary is the fact. Mr. Robinson however says; " God requires *me* to believe the deity of Jesus Christ." It is very well: if *he* be so persuaded, he ought to believe it. But then, added to this, he has also laid before the public a large selection and heap of texts of Scripture, which he asserts to afford such plain proof of Christ being Jehovah the supreme God, that the sacred writers must have been weak men or worse, if they did not intend to teach that doctrine concerning Christ. As *our* faith however must be founded on the evidence of Scripture as it appears to us, and not on Mr. Robinson's authority, I have therefore been at the great pains of weighing his texts of Scripture, one by one, in an even balance, as far as I have been able, and have not found one of them to be of the least validity to prove Christ to be God. It appears to me, and I hope it has appeared to the reader, that Almighty God requires no belief of any deity but his own: and so far from requiring us to believe the *deity* of Jesus Christ, HE has most strictly forbidden us (*d*) to

(*d*) *Thou shalt have no other gods before* ME. Exod. xx. 3. The second article of faith of the modern Jews, is an excellent illustration of this first commandment of Jehovah. *I*

to acknowlege any deity but his own. And therefore we are conſtrained to conclude, that our author has impoſed upon himſelf in this matter, and impoſes upon others, by ſuch a vain imagination, and multiplication of the Deity. Our author goes on;

ii. " Men miſtake by ſubjecting God to laws, " which actually prevail in ſome caſes; but which, " we dare not ſay, prevail in all. The rev. Mr. " Lindſey ſays, Chriſt's character as mediator is " UTTERLY INCOMPATIBLE with the practice of " making him the object of religious worſhip. " He CANNOT be God, and the miniſter of God. " Is Mr. Lindſey ſure of this? Were we to grant, " that nothing like this paſſeth among men, would " it certainly follow, that nothing like this paſſeth " in heaven? The poſſible world is a region un- " explored, and it is raſh to ſay, God cannot be " this, he cannot do that. St. Paul writes, as if " he thought God could do this."

It does not appear that Mr. Lindſey aſſerts any thing that is wrong; or in an improper manner. For though our author makes him to ſay, that God *cannot* be this, *cannot* do that; he only ſays, that *Chriſt cannot* be both God and the ſervant of God. It would be abſurd to attempt the proof of ſuch a propoſition: and therefore Mr. Robinſon lets that alone. But he ſuppoſes he can bring St. Paul to vouch for it. It appears plainly however that he is deceived in the firſt examples he produces, by truſting to our engliſh tranſlation, and neither conſulting the context nor the original. The firſt paſſage he cites, is thus given by him; *God hath ac-*

believe, with a firm and perfect faith, that God is one; there is no unity like his: he alone hath been, is, and ſhall be eternally, our God. Tephilloth, or the Prayers of the Synagogues, &c. London. Printed by Tooke.

cepted

cepted us in the beloved: but in St. Paul it is, εν η εχαριτωσεν ημας εν τω ηγαπημενω, *with which* (God) *hath favoured us by his beloved Son.* Eph. i. 3. 6. The ſecond is in the words of our tranſlators; *we labour to be accepted of Chriſt:* the apoſtle's words are, φιλοτιμουμεθα,—ευαρεστοι αυτω ειναι, *we labour to be approved of,* or, *acceptable to him,* i. e. to Chriſt; (1 Cor. v. 9, 10.) viz. at the future day of judgment; as he proceeds to mention. Now what is there in theſe texts to prove Chriſt to be any thing but the highly favoured ſon, or ſervant, or delegate of God, and by no means God himſelf? I take no note of Eph. v. 27, as unworthy of regard. But his laſt inſtance is not to be ſo lightly paſſed over. I ſhall give the apoſtle's words as he prints them, and as they are in our common engliſh tranſlation, in a column oppoſite.

The tranſlators of the Bible.	Mr. Robinſon.
— *Looking for the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar people.*	THE GREAT GOD, *and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt,* GAVE HIMSELF *for us,* THAT HE MIGHT *redeem us from all iniquity, and* PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF *a peculiar people.*

Remark 1. The reader will obſerve here, that in our common tranſlation, as in the original, *the Great God and our Saviour Chriſt,* are repreſented as two diſtinct Perſons: but as Mr. Robinſon renders it, *Jeſus Chriſt is the Great God himſelf* (*d*).

2. Our

(*d*) He might have alleged, that ſome of the fathers took the apoſtle's words in the way he does; which the original may bear, as there is an ambiguity in it: though the other be the more natural ſenſe, and beſt agreeing with the con-

 text,

2. Our tranſlation, rightly and properly holds forth, that it was *Jeſus Chriſt*, who *gave himſelf for us*, &c: but our author puts, THE GREAT GOD, &c. GAVE HIMSELF *for us*, THAT HE MIGHT PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF, &c.; all this in capitals to catch the eye, as if St. Paul taught, that it was GOD *who gave himſelf for us*, i. e. gave himſelf to die, for that is the meaning of the phraſe: (See John iii. 16.) thus making the eternal God ſubject to death. And the deſign of all this contrivance, is to bring in the apoſtle a favourer of his own ſtrange imagination, that Jeſus Chriſt was both the ſupreme God, and his miniſter or ſervant.

3. It was ſurely a juſtice due to his readers, to have made them acquainted with ſuch a ſignal alteration he makes in our engliſh verſion, and with his

text, and the other parts of Scripture, and of St. Paul's writings. This point, and the whole paſſage, has been fully conſidered by Dr. Clarke; to whom I would refer, but ſhall tranſcribe part of what he advances. "Theſe words, *the* " *glorious appearing* (or, *the appearing of the glory*) *of the Great* " *God and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, (as our *engliſh* tranſlators " rightly render the text,) very naturally ſignify, *the appear-* " *ing of the Great God By our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*; according " to the analogy of thoſe other Scripture-expreſſions, that " *God ſhall judge the world by Jeſus Chriſt*, and that Chriſt " ſhall *come in the glory of his Father*, that is, *the glory of his* " *Father ſhall appear inveſted in him.* Beſides; the words, " τȣ μεγαλȣ Θεȣ, *the great God*, being in the *Old Teſtament* " the character of the *Father*; Deut. x. 17. 2 Sam. vii. 22. " 2 Chr. ii. 5. Nehem. ix. 32. Job xxxvi. 26. Pſ. lxxxvi. " 10. Jer. xxxii. 18; and in the *New Teſtament* never uſed " of *Chriſt*, but of the *Father* only, Rev. xix. 17; 'tis there- " fore very reaſonable that they ſhould here alſo be ſo under- " ſtood. Eſpecially conſidering the *general ſtile* of St. *Paul*: " Who, having laid it down as a *foundation*, 1 Cor. viii. 6. " that *to* US *there is but One* GOD, *the Father*; *and one* LORD, " Jeſus Chriſt: and Eph. iv. 5, 6. *one* LORD, *one* GOD, *and* " *Father of all*, does conſtantly and uniformly keep to this " rule of expreſſion, through his whole writings, &c." Reply to Mr. Nelſon, &c. p. 85, &c.

reaſons

reaſons for it; that they might uſe their own judgment on the point. Whereas, as the paſſage now ſtands, the generality of readers, high and low, who are moſt of them too lazy to turn to the Scriptures themſelves, will be led into and confirmed in ſuperſtitious demeaning notions of God; while others, of a different caſt, will have their prejudices increaſed againſt the Bible, for patronizing ſuch abſurd, incredible things.

iii. Dexterity in criticiſm, p. 75. is with our author, another ſource of men's not believing the Divinity of Jeſus Chriſt. And in ſupport of this, he brings in again the caſe of Stephen, on which he had laboured through ten pages before; imagining the addreſs made by that holy man to Chriſt, in his peculiar circumſtances, under the impreſſion of a heavenly viſion, in which Chriſt had been exhibited to him in glory; to be nevertheleſs a precedent for all chriſtians every where to pray to Chriſt, and to conſider him as the ſupreme God. But this ſubject has been canvaſſed above, p. 86, &c. to which I would refer.

He goes on afterwards, p. 85. to inveigh againſt "the critical diſſection of texts by learned men, "critical anatomiſts," as he calls them; mentioning Dr. Clarke by name, as one of them; and indulging himſelf in a way, in which he is not much to be commended. "I have read Dr. "Clarke, ſays he, and a hundred doctors more; "and I have read alſo a ſaying of one, who al- "though he was no graduate, was greater than them "all. He ſays; Call no man maſter upon earth; for "one is your maſter, even Chriſt. Matth. xxii." It would not however have been amiſs for him, if he had profited by the example of that admirable critic, Dr. Clarke, and moſt ingenuous writer, inſtead of endeavouring thus to pour contempt

upon his honoured name. Whether the want of ſome ſkill in criticiſm, be not one, among many cauſes, of our author's manifeſt ignorance of the true meaning of the Scriptures, the reader will judge from the examination that has been now made of all the paſſages cited by him. In his notes we meet with ſeveral inſtances of his deficiency in this reſpect: one of which I ſhall exhibit.

Our Lord, after his reſurrection, being about to take a final leave of his apoſtles, ſpoke to them; (Matth. xxviii. 18, 19.) *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and make diſciples of all nations*, &c. To come at the true meaning of this declaration, it is proper to obſerve, though it has been touched upon before; that Chriſt the ſpeaker; the perſons, his choſen diſciples, to whom he addreſſes himſelf; the time of his ſpeaking, and all other circumſtances, plainly lead us to conclude, that he here refers only to that divine extraordinary power, which he had not long before promiſed his diſciples on the part of Almighty God, and which was now ſoon to be conferred upon them, to enable them to preach the goſpel with ſucceſs throughout the world. And although he ſays; ALL *power is given unto me*; ſuch general expreſſions, in all writings, are, in all fair conſtruction, to be limited and interpreted by the occaſion, the ſituation and circumſtances of the Speaker, &c. Our author however, takes the word ALL in its utmoſt latitude, to ſignify *infinite power*; and argues upon his own groundleſs ſuppoſition; boldly averring, p. 104, "When it is "objected to us, All power is *given* to Jeſus, there- "fore he is *not* God. We reply, All power is "given to Jeſus, therefore he *is* God," *and ſo on.* To prove afterwards, that the term, to *give*, does not imply any ſuperiority in the giver, or depen-

dence

dence of the receiver in that reſpect, he proceeds to ſay; " The word *give* is equivocal. Our op- " ponents take it for the *conferring* of a right: we " take it for the *acknowlegement* of a right. " The word διδωμι is very vague; and wo be to " the ſyſtem that reſts on its preciſe etymology. " What a fine inference is this! Magiſtrates give " glory and ſtrength and worſhip unto Jehovah; " therefore Jehovah is not God; at moſt he is " only a ſubordinate God; for he derives glory " from magiſtrates. All power is given to me, " ſaid our Redeemer; that is, all heaven allow " what the Jews deny, that I am Lord of all. The " Father hath given me power over all fleſh; that " is, the Father allows and approves of my right " as God, and he has conſtituted the diſplay of it " in me, Jeſus, the man." To ſuch idle talk, and unlearned ſophiſtry, no reply can be made. One is only concerned that a perſon with ſome talents, through haſty prejudice, and giving a looſe to his imagination, ſhould ſo lamentably impoſe upon himſelf on ſo ſerious a ſubject, as he appears to have done here, and throughout his whole work.

SECTION XII.

Concluding Obſervations.

IT is very remarkable, that our author, who ſelects ſuch a number of paſſages of Scripture, to prove Jeſus Chriſt to be the moſt high God, takes no notice of thoſe many others, which in direct terms, exclude Chriſt and every other perſon, from all pretenſions to be the Deity, to belong to it, or to be any part of it, in any other way than is competent to any creature, to whom God may be pleaſed to communicate high divine powers.

One or two of these passages I would mention; and shall begin with one before intimated.

1. The personal pronouns, *I, me, thou, thee, he, him*, with which the prophets speak of or to Jehovah, the most high God, and which he uses concerning himself, demonstrate the single Person of Jehovah who is so spoken of, or who so speaks of himself to be God alone, and no Person else whatsoever. Almost every page of Scripture proclaims this truth. But to make one exhibition of it, I shall take some verses of the xlvth chapter of Isaiah, so happily illustrated by Bishop Lowth, containing a prediction of Cyrus king of Persia, before he was born, by name, and of his conquests, particularly the taking of Babylon.

Thus saith JEHOVAH to his anointed;
To Cyrus, whom I hold fast by the right hand:
That I may subdue nations before him;
And ungird the loins of kings:
That I may open before him the valves;
And the gates shall not be shut.
I will go before thee;
And make the mountains level:
The valves of brass will I break in sunder;
And the bars of iron will I hew down.
And I will give unto thee the treasures of darkness;
And the stores deep hidden in secret places:
That thou mayest know that I am JEHOVAH;
HE that calleth thee by thy name, the GOD of Israel.
I am JEHOVAH, and none else;
Beside me there is no God:
I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me.
That they may know, from the rising of the sun,
And from the west, that there is none beside Me:
I am JEHOVAH, and none else;

Forming

Forming light, and creating darkneſs;
Making peace and creating evil;
I JEHOVAH am the author of all theſe things.

It follows afterwards, ver 18.

For thus ſaith JEHOVAH,
Who created the heavens; HE is God:
Who formed the earth and made it; He hath eſtabliſhed it:
He created it not in vain; for he formed it to be inhabited;
I am JEHOVAH, and none beſides:
I have not ſpoken in ſecret, in a dark place of the earth;
I have not ſaid to the ſeed of Jacob, ſeek ye me in vain:
I am JEHOVAH, who ſpeak truth, who give direct anſwers.
Aſſemble yourſelves together, and come;
Gather yourſelves together, ye that are eſcaped from among the nations.
They know nothing, that carry about the wood, which they have carved;
That addreſs themſelves in prayer to a god, which cannot ſave.
Publiſh it abroad, and bring them near; and let them conſult together:
Who hath made this known long before, hath declared it from the firſt?
Is it not I JEHOVAH, than whom there is no other God?
A God, that uttereth truth and granteth ſalvation; there is none beſide me?
Look unto me and be ſaved, o all ye remote people of the earth;
For I am God, and there is none elſe.

Remark 1. The weight of the language here uſed is ſo ſtrong; I *am* JEHOVAH, *and none elſe, beſide*

beſide ME *there is no God: there is none beſides* ME. JEHOVAH, *who created the heavens,* HE *is God. Is it not* JEHOVAH, *than whom there is no other God? there is none beſide* ME: This language, I ſay, is ſo expreſs, diſtinct, and forcible, as to reſiſt and forbid every thought and idea of Jeſus Chriſt, or any other perſon, being Jehovah, or God. We are ſure of nothing, if we are not ſure of this.

2. Jeſus Chriſt, with every other perſon whatſoever, is alſo hereby excluded from being the creator: for Jehovah here, as well as elſewhere, appropriates that to himſelf alone. This is here mentioned only to confirm the interpretation above given of John i. 1, 2, &c. that the *Word,* by which all things are ſaid to be made, (if thereby the natural creation is intended,) could not be Jeſus Chriſt, but is the Wiſdom, Power, or Energy of Jehovah, God himſelf.

3. GOD is ſaid here *to go before Cyrus, to make the mountains level for him to paſs over.* Not ſurely God in perſon. But it is a grand, ſublime deſcription of the Divine Providence attending that prince, and proſpering his expedition againſt Babylon. And this adds ſtrength to the explanation above (p. 103, &c.) given, of the like language, Iſaiah xl. 9, 10; *Say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God. Behold the Lord God will come,* &c; where the preaching of the goſpel, with an extraordinary divine power, by Chriſt, and his apoſtles, is deſcribed, as if *God himſelf was preſent and acted.*

I ſhall barely point out a few other paſſages of Scripture, totally inconſiſtent with the idea of Chriſt, or any other perſon, being God but one, the Almighty Father himſelf. Our Saviour declared directly, that he himſelf was *not* God;

God; and that there was but one Perſon who *was* God; in the reply which he gave to an application made to him; *why calleſt thou me good? there* IS *none good but one*, that is *God*. In his humble, devout prayer, John xvii. 3. he addreſſes the Father, as the only true God; thereby ſhewing that he had no idea of himſelf, but as being his highly favoured and beloved creature, dependent upon him. To name only one inſtance more: St. Paul ſays, 1 Cor. viii. 6. *To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things*; Eph. iv. 6. *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* It follows therefore that there is no other God, but the ſingle Perſon of the Father. If Chriſt, or any other Perſon be at any time called God; the term is uſed in a leſs proper inferior ſenſe; as when Moſes (Exodus vii. 1.) is ſaid to be a god to Pharaoh. Theſe, with many other the like paſſages, ſhould have been explained and made conſiſtent with his hypotheſis, which never yet has been done; before Mr. Robinſon had ventured to declare Chriſt to be the Supreme God, Jehovah, and to ſpeak leſs reſpectfully of the ſacred writers for uſing the language they do of him, if he be not God.

II.

In reading the Scriptures, no man of plain underſtanding, unleſs taught the contrary beforehand, would ever ſuſpect there more Gods than one to be therein revealed; or that any other perſon was God beſides HIM, who is deſcribed in the beginning as the Creator of all things; who manifeſted himſelf to the Antediluvians, and to the patriarchs after the deluge; who ſeparated one people from the reſt of the nations to preſerve his name and

and true worſhip among them, and gave them a law by Moſes; who ſpoke by the prophets; and who according to his promiſe by them, and eſpecially by Moſes, did at laſt raiſe up and ſend unto them Jeſus Chriſt, a prophet reſembling this their divine lawgiver, but in extraordinary power and communications from the Deity far exceeding him: by which he was qualified to teach thoſe truths that Moſes could not teach, and particularly to give aſſurance of an eternal life after death, to all thoſe of the human ſpecies, who by following the goſpel, ſhould become fitted and qualified for it. This holy one of God, the bleſſed Jeſus, was ſo far from aſſuming any thing to himſelf as God; that he conſtantly declared, that he received all his power from him, and was ſent and acted by the authority of the one God, and ſupreme Father of all. And though in our engliſh Bibles there are ſeveral wrong tranſlations made through ignorance or prejudice, and in the printed Greek teſtament ſome words changed, and one whole verſe inſerted, 1 John v. 7. by deſign or miſtake, to favour the notion of Chriſt being God: Yet the general tenour of the whole is ſo full and clear, that one Perſon, even that of the Almighty Father, is God alone, and no other; as to bear down any ſuggeſtion to the contrary, that might ariſe from one or two ſuch particular paſſages. So that it is a moſt natural account and concluſion, which we are told of; that when (*a*) Job Ben Solaman, the African prince (who was maſter of the Arabic, and had acquired a competent knowlege of the engliſh language,) was in England about fifty years ago, and was aſked, after reading the New Teſtament, if he found three

(*a*) A friendly dialogue between a common Unitarian Chriſtian, and an Athanaſian, 1784. p. 23. *note.*

Gods:

Gods: he replied, No, NO! ONE GREAT GOD, ONE GREAT GOOD GOD.

But when we turn to the generality of chriſtian writers and commentators, and particularly to the author here examined; it then becomes a laborious reſearch, and extremely difficult, if not impoſſible, to find out that there is but One God. For we are preſented with three perſons, each of them claiming to be God, claiming alſo peculiar and diſtinct honour and worſhip as ſuch. Mr. Robinſon indeed intirely drops the mention of the Third Perſon, and confines his pen to maintain that Jeſus Chriſt is truly and properly God, and to be worſhiped; and to ſupport this amaſſes together a prodigious variety of paſſages both of the Old and New Teſtament; and on contraſting them together, boldly aſſerts that they prove his point. So that, as he would have us to read and underſtand it, the Bible wears quite a new aſpect, and preſents a different God and object of worſhip, from what a common unprejudiced reader finds to be in it. To this new object of chriſtian worſhip he gives the new name of JEHOVAH-JESUS; making him to be the God that appeared to the patriarchs and to Moſes, and who was worſhiped by them as Jehovah, the Lord their God. p. 42.

III.

It is not eaſy to deſcribe the great harm that is done to true religion and the goſpel, by ſuch repreſentations of it. Thoſe who have not abilities or leiſure for learned inquiries are thrown quite into a wood by it. They think the book of Revelation to be all myſtery and darkneſs; and finding their rational faculties of no uſe to them in their ſtudy of it, they abandon themſelves implicitly to the guidance of others. And what they have thus

imbibed without reaſon, knowing no other way, they defend with paſſion; and thus poſſeſſed with the notion that Jeſus is the ſupreme God, and that it is a point of the firſt conſequence, they have little charity for thoſe that differ from them therein: nay, they will oftentimes proceed ſo far as to eſteem them wicked, their enemies, and enemies to God, who by fair argument only, and from the Scriptures, attempt to prove Jeſus to be but the highly favoured creature and ſervant of the great God and Father of all, and not God himſelf.

Another great miſchief reſulting from the aſcription of ſuch contradictory impoſſible doctrines concerning the Deity to the Bible, is in its indiſpoſing men to the goſpel, who are of ſceptical minds, and have never examined into the rational grounds of evidence there are for it, and how far it is in itſelf from teaching ſuch doctrines. When they ſee that its learned profeſſors cannot agree whether one perſon be God, or three perſons; when they hear ſuch language as our author continually uſes (*b*) in the ſupport of his own notion, that Jeſus Chriſt is the ſupreme God; they are rendered averſe to the whole ſyſtem of revelation; they look upon it to be all a riddle and uncertainty, and turn away from it.

IV.

The misfortune farther is, that with ſuch writers there is no alternative; but if you do not ſubſcribe

(*b*) "*The apoſtles*, ſays he, *ought to have kept up an idea* "*of the diſtance between a mere man and the infinite God. They* "*have not done ſo. On the contrary, they have aſcribed the* "*glories of God to Jeſus Chriſt. Either Jeſus Chriſt is God,* "*or their conduct is unaccountable.* p. 20." With what little ground theſe confident aſſertions are made, has been abundantly ſhewn.

to

to all that they have worked up from their imaginations and prejudices, you ſhall be ſuppoſed to injure the goſpel, and to believe little of it. "To deprive chriſtianity of its myſteries," ſays our author towards the cloſe of his work, p. 109, "is to reduce it to a feeble human ſcience; we "get rid of myſtery and motive together. The "removal of, what are called by ſome, corruptions "of chriſtianity, is to be rewarded, it ſeems, with "the converſion of Jews and Mahometans. But "let us not too eagerly follow theſe illuſory "dreams. Let us conſider four things. 1. It is "not certain, that Jews and Turks reject chriſ-"tianity on account of our doctrine of Chriſt's "divinity."

I ſhall not attempt to ſatisfy one who can doubt of a fact of ſuch great notoriety, as that one great cauſe of the rejection of the goſpel by Jews and Mahometans, is the doctrine of the Trinity, and of Chriſt's divinity in particular. But I ſhall produce the contrary ſentiment of Dr. Jortin, whom Mr. Robinſon cites with reſpect; not with a view to oppoſe one man's aſſertion to another's, but becauſe what the Doctor advances falls in ſo directly with the ſubject of this work. That judicious and moſt learned writer, in making ſome remarks on the difficulties attending the converſion of the Jews, ſays, Eccleſ. Hiſt. vol. iii. p. 438. "Ano-"ther great and well known difficulty in the con-"verſion of the Jews, (as alſo of the Mahometans,) "is the doctrine of the holy Trinity, which they "have always been taught to look upon as not "reconcileable with the unity of God." Going on then to point out what method it might be beſt to purſue in their converſion, he adds; "It "will be well worth the while to conſider, how the "oldeſt

" oldeſt chriſtian apologiſt (*c*) now extant, (i. e. " Juſtin Martyr) hath reaſoned with the Jews upon " this ſubject, as alſo how Limborch managed that " part

(*c*) The paſſage in Juſtin Martyr, is in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, and is this.

" Trypho. *I am ſufficiently acquainted with your ſentiments* " *in theſe things. I beg therefore you would reſume and finiſh* " *the ſubject with which you began: for you tell me of* a moſt " unheard of (παραδόξος) thing, and ſuch as is impoſſible to " be proved. *For to maintain, that this ſame Chriſt was a* " *God before the world was made, and afterwards ſubmitted to* " *be born and to be made man, and that he was not man of man* " *as others are, is a* thing not only beyond all belief, but " quite fooliſh." " Juſtin. *To this I replied. I am ſenſible* " *that ſuch an opinion would appear incredible, eſpecially to* " *thoſe of your nation, who were never well-diſpoſed to under-* " *ſtand or to do the will of God, but to follow your own Rabbis,* " *as God himſelf exclaims againſt you. Nevertheleſs,* Trypho, " *ſaid I*; it would not follow that he was not the Chriſt " (i. e. the anointed prophet) of God, if I ſhould not be " able to demonſtrate, that he did preexiſt as the Son of the " Creator of the univerſe, and as God, and was afterwards " born a man of a virgin. *But ſince it has been already ſhewn,* " *that he is the Chriſt of God, whatever elſe he be*; *if I ſhould* " *not be able to make good my point, that he did preexiſt, and* " *ſubmitted according to the will of the Father to be born a* " *mortal man, ſubject to the like infirmities and ſufferings, and* " *having fleſh and blood as we have:* it is but juſt to ſay that " I am miſtaken in this thing, and not to deny that he is " the Chriſt, though he ſhould appear to be a man born of " men, and nothing more be proved than that he was the " Chriſt only by the choice that God had made of him. *For* " *ſome of our race, my friends,* (meaning heathen converts to " chriſtianity like himſelf) *who confeſs him to be the Chriſt,* " *do yet affirm him to be only a man of men. To whom I do not* " *aſſent,* though the greateſt part of them ſhould ſay that they " have been of the ſame opinion: *ſince it is the injunction of* " *Chriſt, that we are not to liſten to the commands of men, but to* " *the things that have been delivered by the holy prophets, and* " *by Chriſt himſelf.*" Juſtini Opera, Hagæ Comitum. 1742. p. 143, 144.

Thus we ſee, that this early chriſtian writer, wedded as he was to his own notion of Chriſt's preexiſtence, did nevertheleſs allow thoſe to be chriſtians as well as himſelf, for which

" part of the controverſy with Orobio. What
" right hath a modern controvertiſt to require
" more from a Jew, than Juſtin Martyr required
" from Trypho? I might ſay, than the apoſtles
" and firſt preachers required from thoſe whom
" they converted, when they admitted them to

which Dr. Jortin commends him, who only believed Jeſus to be the Chriſt, the anointed prophet of God; though they did not eſteem him any other than a man like themſelves; but choſen of God, and highly favoured by him. There are alſo other important concluſions to be made from this paſſage of Juſtin, which induced me to give it the reader in the exacteſt manner I have been able to tranſlate it. For,

1. We here ſee that the doctrine of Chriſt's preexiſtence, by Juſtin's own confeſſion, was a thing quite new, and paradoxical, and that aſtoniſhed the Jew with whom he is converſing. And this gives reaſon to conclude, and confirms the opinion, that it was a doctrine firſt diſcovered by Juſtin himſelf, and was the offspring of Plato's philoſophy, which, he ſays, led him to embrace chriſtianity; joined to his intire ignorance of the hebrew language and idiom.

2. This further is ſeen from the reſerve and diffidence with which he broaches this novel opinion of his; not expecting that others would immediately give into it, and allow his arguments: and ſo far from throwing out anathemas againſt or quarrelling with them for not believing the preexiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt, he ſpeaks in the ſofteſt tone, with great modeſty, deſiring only that if they agree not with him in that point, and hold Chriſt to be a mortal man, they would not reject the evidence that he had given of his being the Chriſt. And it is obſervable, that he dwells and lays much weight upon this.

There is a difference among learned men, how one part of the laſt ſentence of this paſſage of Juſtin, ought to be underſtood. Whether he aſſerts, that the opinion of Chriſt being a man like all others was held by the greateſt part of chriſtians at that time; or that the greater part were in his ſentiment of the preexiſtence. To me, not only the words of Juſtin, but the context, appear plainly to favour the former opinion of the real humanity of Chriſt being that which generally prevailed: for this pious father's allegation, that he was bound to follow the teachings of Chriſt and the prophets, and not the authority of men, is evidently an apology for differing from the majority.

" baptiſm? *And Philip ſaid, if thou believeſt with* " *all thine heart, thou mayeſt be baptized. And he* " *anſwering ſaid; I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the* " *Son of God.* Acts viii. 37. *And this is life eternal,* " *that they might know thee, the only true God, and* " *Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* John xvii. 3."

After this, Dr. Jortin quotes a very remarkable aſſertion of Orobio the Jew, in his friendly conference with Limborch; and the reply which the latter made to it. And I would wiſh it to be obſerved, that theſe two great men, Limborch and Jortin, ſcholars of the firſt rank, of ſolid judgment, and of unimpeached integrity, do both of them agree with the Jewiſh phyſician of Amſterdam, that if Chriſt had taken upon him to be the moſt high God, the Jews at that time would have been bound by their law to have put him to death for it. And as both the law and the goſpel came from the ſame God, and cannot contradict each other, this is one demonſtration among a thouſand, that Jeſus Chriſt is not the moſt high God, but his creature. The extract of the conference alluded to and cited by Jortin, but not tranſlated; is as follows;

" Orobio. *The prophet, who ſhall require men to believe in him, as the true God of Iſrael; who ſhall take upon himſelf to be the Almighty Being; who ſhall command the people to liſten to his words, upon his own authority; ought not to be believed or received: and granting, which is impoſſible, that the Meſſiah, whom the Jews expect, ſhould teach that doctrine to Iſrael, the law would require him to be ſtoned to death as a falſe prophet.*

Limborch. To this inference and concluſion I replied; *that Jeſus Chriſt always declared himſelf to be the meſſenger, and ſon of the Father; and required men to believe in him only as ſuch. Nor doth*

doth the gospel require any thing more concerning the person of Christ, as necessary to be believed. If others have laid down more articles as necessary, I am not bound to submit to their authority, as I hold the Scripture alone to be the rule of my faith. Therefore it is from that source of the Scriptures only, that my learned opponent, as I have often reminded him, *should draw his arguments against christianity; and not from the doctrines about which christians differ with one another, and such as the Scripture does not propose as necessary to salvation.*"

IV.

Our author proceeds in the same way to add; "Were we to divest religion of all these offensive "*credenda*, and were we to reduce it to the gospel "of Socrates, or to the more refined gospel of "Professor Hutcheson, would it convert the Turks "and the Jews?" However lightly Mr. Robinson thinks concerning the matter, it would certainly be one great step towards bringing Jews and Mahometans to believe the gospel, were we able to convince them, that christians reverenced Jesus Christ as the most highly favoured prophet of God, but did not worship him, nor any other person, but the single person of Jehovah, the almighty Father and Creator of all things, the God of Abraham, the God of Israel, the one, only true God.

But something must be said in defence of two such eminent teachers of truth and virtue; who, notwithstanding the disrespectful way in which they are here mentioned, will continue to spread their light, and benefit mankind to latest generations. There is no need of lessening what was good and excellent among the heathens, to set off the gospel. Be the moral lessons of Socrates ever so excellent, and why should we seek to detract from them? they will still fall infinitely below the teachings of

Jesus, as much as he surpassed the Athenian philosopher in moral excellence. How defective the lectures and exhortations of the latter must have been, in the most powerful excitement to virtue of all others, the hope of the divine favour for ever which the gospel holds forth, appears in the account that Plato gives of his master's behaviour and conversation with his friends in his last moments; where he appears under much uncertainty about a future state. Nevertheless, instead of depreciating the morality of this excellent heathen, it would be better to make our fellow-christians acquainted with the holy rules which he laid down to himself and to others, and the heighth of virtue to which he attained by them, of which too many christians with their superior advantages, come greatly short. In proof of this we may allege one part of his daily practice, in his own words, from his apology for himself, upon his trial, which may excuse his speaking in his own commendation. "However you may understand it," says he to his judges, "I think a greater blessing never befell "this city, than my ministry among you, which "I have received from God. For I do nothing "else, but go continually about, (*e*) persuading "both young and old, not to be so much solicitous

(*e*) He had said a little before; "If therefore, as I observed, ye would absolve me upon these conditions, that "I should no longer teach my philosophy; I should reply, "I respect and love you, O ye Athenians, but chuse rather "to obey God than you. And so long as I live, and strength "is afforded, I will not cease to philosophize, and to exhort "and teach every one of you whom I meet, in this my usual "way; *Well now, my friend! you that are a citizen of Athens, "that mighty city, so illustrious for wisdom and extent of power; "are not you ashamed to be so anxious after riches and fame "and honours: but bestow not the least care or thought in seeking "wisdom and truth, and acquiring a habit of virtue and all "goodness.*" Platon. Apol. Socr. p. 25, 26. Cantab. 1683.

"to

" to gratify the bodily appetites, to heap up wealth, " or to gain any outward advantage whatsoever; " as to improve the mind by the continual exercise " of all virtue and goodness. And I say to them, " that a man's true value doth not arise from his " riches, or from any outward circumstances of " life: but that true riches, and every real good, " whether public or private, proceeds wholly from " virtue. If any one therefore say, that in teach- " ing these things, I corrupt the youth of this city, " he should shew that these things are pernicious " and hurtful," &c.(*f*) That fine scholar and true christian, Erasmus, thought far higher of Socrates than our author. I shall gratify the reader with an extract out of one of his Colloquies, a book put into our hands at school, but which in many parts may instruct and edify us in our riper years. It is in that which he intitles, A *Religious Entertainment*. " I never remember," says one of the company, " to have read any thing in hea- " then antiquity, that seemed more exactly to cor- " respond with the character of a true christian, " than Socrates's short speech to Crito, just as he " was going to drink the poison, by which he was " condemned to end his life. *Whether*, says he, " *God will approve my actions or no, I cannot tell.* " *But this I know, that it has been my constant*

(*f*) Xenophon, another of Socrates's pupils, has preserved a conversation between their master and Aristodemus, in which he proves the being of a God, and a particular providence, in a very convincing, affecting manner. At the close of it, Xenophon says; " It seems to me, that by such " discourses, Socrates formed those with whom he conversed, " to refrain from all impious, unjust, and base actions; not " only when in the sight of the world, but when in secret " and alone; convincing them, that nothing which they " did could escape the notice of God." Memorab. Ed. Simpson. p. 73, 74.

" *aim and endeavour to pleaſe him. And I am not* " *without hope, that my endeavours will be ac-* " *ceptable to him.* A moſt extraordinary pious " and humble diſpoſition," replies another of the company, " in a man that never heard of Chriſt, " nor ever ſaw the holy Scriptures. I declare when " I read of ſuch things in a heathen, I can ſcarce " refrain from crying out; *O holy* Socrates, *pray* " *for me!*" A fine ſatyr this on their ſaint-worſhip at that time, when they were often canonizing men of immoral or dubious characters; and a tacit condemnation of all ſuch worſhip.

Our author's cenſure of the late Profeſſor Hutcheſon of Glaſgow, is, that ſuch " a refined " goſpel as he taught, would not be likely to con- " vert Jews and Turks;" and he afterward terms it, " the reducing of the goſpel to an enfeebled " ſyſtem of mere moral philoſophy." I cannot ſee any grounds for ſuch a reflection on the memory of this worthy perſon, that he was leſs a chriſtian than our author and his friends; nor any motive for it, unleſs his piety and chriſtianity were of too rational a complexion to pleaſe ſome perſons. Such a judgment can hardly be formed from any of Dr. Hutcheſon's writings that are extant: for he did not publiſh any thing directly upon the goſpel. In his treatiſe on Moral Philoſophy he does not touch upon it, his ſubject not leading him to it. But he is particularly mindful therein to ſecure, and inculcate on his pupils, a belief of, and inward regard to God, the firſt and great relation of all rational beings, as what was to influence them in all other things; which was laying a good foundation for the goſpel. And though he inforced his moral leſſons by other motives than thoſe of the goſpel, yet they were not ſuch as were inconſiſtent, but concurred with it; and we have need of every

poſſible motive to make us attend to what is of ſuch vaſt importance to our true happineſs. Nor is there any juſt cauſe hence to conclude, that he was uninfluenced by them himſelf, or neglected in proper time and place to impreſs upon others, thoſe moſt powerful chriſtian motives to virtue and obedience to the will of God, ariſing from the revelation of his boundleſs love to mankind by Jeſus Chriſt, and his intending us for an eternal happineſs. If our author had looked into the ſhort account of the life (*g*) of this eminent perſon, prefixed many years ago by the venerable Rector of the Univerſity of Glaſgow, ſtill living; a name to be mentioned always with reſpect by all lovers of good letters and true religion; he would have found that Dr. Hutcheſon was not unmindful of what belonged to the Chriſtian as well as the Moral Profeſſor. " After mentioning his conſtant lectures " five days of the week, on Natural Religion, " Morals, Juriſprudence and Government; and " that he had another lecture three days of the " week, in which ſome of the fineſt writers of " antiquity, both Greek and Latin, on the ſubject " of morals, were interpreted, and the language as well as the ſentiment explained in a maſterly manner, he adds; " Beſides theſe ſets of lectures, " he gave a weekly one on the Sunday evening, " on the truth and excellency of chriſtianity: " in which he produced and illuſtrated, with clear- " neſs and ſtrength, all the evidences of its truth " and importance; *taking his views of its doc-* " *trines and divine ſcheme, from the original records*

(*g*) A ſyſtem of Moral Philoſophy, by the late Francis Hutcheſon, LL.D. Profeſſor of Philoſophy in the Univerſity of Glaſgow.—To which is prefixed ſome account of the life, writings and character of the author, by the Rev. William Leechman, D.D. 1755.

" *of the New Teſtament, and not from the party-*
" *tenets, or ſcholaſtic ſyſtems of modern ages.* This
" was the moſt crowded of all his lectures; as all
" the different ſorts and ranks of ſtudents, being
" at liberty from their peculiar purſuits on this
" day, choſe to attend it, being always ſure of
" finding both pleaſure and inſtruction." This Sunday-lecture, it is to be obſerved, was quite a voluntary ſervice; it not being an attention to which his profeſſorſhip called him. And although therein he might not treat of ſome doctrines in the way that Mr. Robinſon would approve, he might not be a leſs perfect teacher of the goſpel on that account. I ſhall tranſcribe one or two features of his character from Dr. Leechman's preface, p. xxix, xxx. wiſhing our author nothing better, I can wiſh him nothing better than that as a man, a chriſtian, and teacher of truth, he may reſemble Profeſſor Hutcheſon.

" No ſymptoms of vanity or ſelf-conceit," ſays his biographer from perſonal knowlege, " ap-
" peared in him. He ſought not after fame, nor
" had he any vain complacency in the unſought
" poſſeſſion of it. While he was viſibly ſuperior
" to others about him, he was the only one that
" was quite inſenſible of it. His own talents and
" endowments were not the objects on which his
" thoughts were employed: he was always carried
" away from attending to himſelf, by the exerciſe
" of kind affections, zeal for ſome public gene-
" rous deſigns, or keen inquiries after truth. This
" was ſuch an acknowleged part of his character,
" that thoſe who were leaſt diſpoſed to think well
" of him, never inſinuated that he was proud or
" vain. The natural modeſty of his temper was
" heightened and refined by his religious ſenti-
" ments. He had a full perſuaſion and warm ſenſe

" of

" of the great truths of natural and revealed re-
" ligion, and of the importance of juſt and ra-
" tional devotion to the happineſs of human life,
" and the ſtability and purity of a virtuous charac-
" ter. The power of devout ſentiments over his
" mind appeared in his converſation. In his pub-
" lic prelections he frequently took occaſion from
" any hints which his ſubject afforded him, as well
" as when it was the direct ſubject itſelf, to run out
" at great length, and with great ardour, on the
" reaſonableneſs and advantages of habitual re-
" gards to God, and referring all our talents, vir-
" tues, and enjoyments, to his bounty. Such
" habitual references appeared to him the ſureſt
" means of checking thoſe emotions of pride,
" vain complacency, and ſelf-applauſe, which are
" apt to ſpring up in the minds of thoſe, who do
" not ſeriouſly and frequently reflect, that they did
" not make themſelves *to differ from others*, and
" *that they have nothing but what they have re-*
" *ceived*. Such ſentiments deeply rooted in the
" mind, he looked upon as the proper foundation
" of that ſimplicity of heart and life, which is the
" higheſt perfection of a virtuous character." (*b*)

(*b*) In the appendix, vol. ii. to a noble work, intitled, " Memoirs of Thomas Hollis, Eſq. (τυ μακαριτυ, that firſt of Engliſhmen,) London, printed, 1780:" amidſt many prints and engravings of eminent perſons, and of curious remains of antiquity, to excite to virtue and the love of the fine arts, with which its worthy patron hath adorned it; we have a print of Dr. Hutcheſon, from a medallion of him, done, at the deſire of a diſciple of his, by Ant. Selvi, of Florence; and a deſcription of it from Mazzuchelli's Numiſmata, &c. with a ſhort account of the excellent Profeſſor. The print is ſaid to have preſerved a juſt likeneſs of the original, and ſeems to beſpeak the manly, candid, open, liberal, benevolent mind, that dwelt in him.

V. Our

V.

Our author, in the concluſion, adopts the hymn of a pious author addreſſed to Chriſt:

Hail, thou eternal fulneſs, hail;
Great ſource of bliſs divine!
In whom adoring angels ſee
All thy great Father ſhine.

The character, the virtues, the excellency, the conſummate worth of the bleſſed Jeſus, are, and will be a moſt pleaſing theme of contemplation and joy to his ſincere followers; and the heart will oft overflow with gratitude at the recollection of that love ſo ſtrong and powerful, which led him, for the good of his brethren of mankind, to give up his life in torments, thereby to ſeal that holy doctrine, deſigned and calculated to bring us to virtue and to eternal life; and to ſet alſo an example of what we owe to one another, and to the truth: Nor will there be wanting humble hope of knowing and being known to this benevolent Saviour, as we have a promiſe of being for ever with him (1 Theſſ. ii. iv. 17.) in the future world. But I cannot pray to him as God, becauſe he himſelf tells me continually, that he is not God; but his creature, his ſon, his ſervant, his meſſenger, his great prophet. Nor did he ever ſay, that he was to be worſhiped, or prayed unto, or that hymns of prayer and thankſgiving were to be addreſſed to him, as authorized and enabled to hear them.

There is a very remarkable prayer of Simplicius, a heathen philoſopher, which I hope may be no unſuitable concluſion to the preſent diſquiſition. It was compoſed by him and placed at the end of a work, concerning which an eminent chriſtian (*g*) writer

(*g*) Simplicius's Commentary on Epictetus. Fabricius apud Lardner, Vol. IV. Teſtimonies, p. 318.

ſpeaks;

ſpeaks; "that there are few things in all antiquity, "which contain ſounder precepts to form men to "virtue, or that better aſſert and defend the divine "providence in the government of the world." He was a perſon of great piety and virtue; and perhaps might be diſcouraged and kept from properly inquiring into and embracing the truth of the goſpel, by the very immoral lives of chriſtians in the ſixth century, when he lived; and by their idolatrous worſhip at that time. Whether he may not allude to ſomething of the latter kind in the cloſe of his prayer, the reader will judge.

(*h*) *O Thou ſovereign Lord of all, the father and the guide of the reaſon that is in us! Make us continually mindful, I beſeech Thee, of the dignity which Thou haſt conferred upon us; and afford us thy aſſiſtance* (συμπραξαι, *cooperate with us*) *that we may act with freedom, and being purified from the bodily appetites, and unreaſonable paſſions, may ſubdue and get the maſtery over them, and render them ſubſervient to the beſt purpoſes; and that by the light of truth, our judgment may be ſo directed, that we may adhere to thoſe things that are really good. Finally, I intreat Thee, the Saviour, to diſperſe and remove intirely the miſts, which darken the eyes of our minds; that in the language of Homer, we may know how to diſtinguiſh between* GOD *and man.*

(*h*) Ικετευω σε, Δεσποτα, ο πατηρ και ηγεμων της εν ημιν λογυ, κ. τ. λ. Simplic. Comment. in Epicteti Enchiridion, Londini, 1670. p. 297.

Texts

Texts of Scripture, which contain *ſpurious* and *falſe* readings, quoted as genuine by Mr. Robinſon.

N. B. The words put in a Roman character, are known not to have been the words of the ſacred writers.

p. 16, 17.—Acts xx. 28. *Feed the church of* God, *which he hath purchaſed with his own blood.*

p. 32.—1 Corinthians xv. 47. *The ſecond man is* the Lord *from heaven.*

p. 17.—1 John iii. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love* of God, *becauſe he laid down his life for us.*

p. 27. 41.—Revelation i. 2. *Saying,* I am Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt, and *what thou ſeeſt write in a book.*

Inſtances of very blameable alterations made in the words of Scripture, to favour the doctrine of Chriſt being Jehovah, the moſt high God.

p. 131, 132.—Iſaiah xlii. 13. 11, 12. *The Lord* Jeſus *came forth as a mighty man: Let the wilderneſs, the cities, the villages, the caves give glory to Jehovah* Jeſus, *and declare his praiſe in the iſlands.*

p. 170.—John 1. i. *Jeſus Chriſt is* GOD.

p. 174.—Coloſſ. ii. 3. *The acknowlegement of* the deity, *both of the Father, and of Chriſt, is a myſtery in which are treaſures both of wiſdom and knowlege.*

p. 179.—Titus ii. 13, 14. THE GREAT GOD *and our Saviour Jesus Christ*, GAVE HIMSELF *for us*, THAT HE MIGHT *redeem us from all iniquity, and* PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF *a peculiar people.*

Instances of acknowleged wrong translations of the Scriptures, made use of to countenance the doctrine of Christ being the most high God.

p. 37, 38.—Isaiah ix. 6. *The name of* THE CHILD *is the* EVERLASTING *Father.*

Zechariah xiii. 17. *Awake, o sword, against my Shepherd, and against* the man that is my fellow, *saith the* LORD *of hosts.*

p. 76, 77.—Philippians ii. 10. *Who being in the form of God*, thought it not robbery to be equal with *God.*

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N. B. *The cyphers in roman characters refer to the Preface.*

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